

# IN THESE TIMES

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have changed  
but not the  
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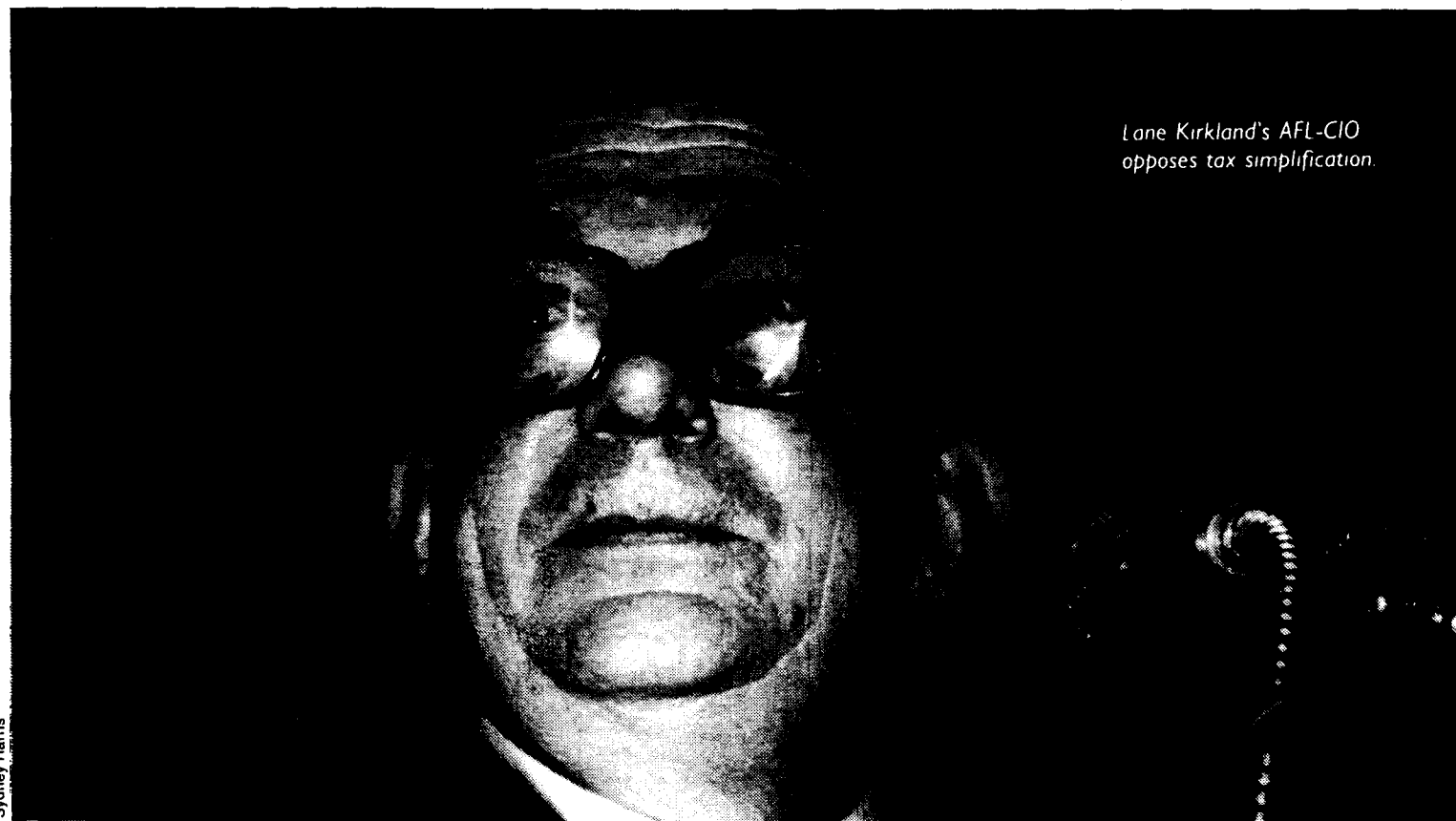
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Lane Kirkland's AFL-CIO  
opposes tax simplification.

Sydney Harris

## Labor's tax inertia

By Jeff Drumtra

WASHINGTON

Asked if organized labor remains influential in shaping federal tax policy, Arnold Cantor, an economist for the AFL-CIO, emits a long sigh. "No, of course not," Cantor responds, giving the impression that the question irritates or depresses him—or both. "We have very few friends [on tax policy]," he says candidly. "We're fighting a rear-guard action. We've been ineffective...."

At a time when talk of tax reform fills the air as never before, one of the strongest traditional advocates of reform finds itself relegated to the periphery of the tax debate in Washington. Labor's isolation on the tax issue says a lot about the changing complexion of tax-reform ideology, and the tensions within the Democratic Party as it seeks to unify behind new ideas. Labor's absence from center stage during the ongoing tax reform debate also indicates its weakened political clout on fiscal issues.

Tax reform has become not so much a partisan issue as a generational one. Labor—and to some extent the entire Democratic Party—is caught in a generational clash between traditional notions of tax reform, and the new ideas for reform and simplification put forth by young lawmakers of both political parties, as well as by the Treasury Department.

Labor clings to its own vision of the perfect tax system. That utopia remains unchanged since the New Deal: a steeply progressive tax containing multiple tax brackets, hefty tax burdens on wealthy individuals and corporations and personal tax deductions protecting the hard-earned fringe benefits that unions have won for workers.

This philosophy appears outdated to younger reformers—many of them in labor's own Democratic Party—who believe the road to tax reform and tax fairness is paved with flatter tax rates and virtually no deductions, credits or exclusions. Even tax breaks that benefit lower income individuals by encouraging medical insurance and pension plans would be repealed in the drive for tax simplicity. New-style reform seeks to reduce the number of tax brackets from 15 to three or fewer, with a top tax rate of about 35 percent rather than the 50 percent maximum rate in current law.

The rift between the two tax reform camps—and the disarray within the Democratic Party—was evident in the tax plan Walter Mondale pieced together last fall. It was imbued with labor's traditional philosophy: Mondale proposed a surtax on the wealthy and a minimum tax on corporations, ignoring the opportunity to position the Democratic Party foursquare behind a simpler tax code, flatter tax rates or other structural changes. Mondale's package became a courageous political flop that "could very well have been written by the AFL-CIO in the '40s" because of its unimaginative ideas, suggests Mark Bloomfield, a business tax lobbyist with the politically powerful American Council for Capital Formation.

"Labor is obsessed with progressivity in the tax rates, and it won't give that up for simplification. They don't understand that simplification is progressive," contends an aide to one Democratic senator.

The Treasury Department's tax reform proposal announced last November represents the new style of tax reform eschewed by labor. It would wipe out most of the corporate and individual loopholes in the tax code in exchange for lower tax rates. The trade-off raises corporate taxes by 25 percent while reducing taxes on individuals by an average of 8.5 percent.

Shifting the tax burden toward corporations is the meat and potatoes of labor's tax policy. But labor has responded with a barrage of criticism against the Treasury's tax reform package that makes business rhetoric against the proposal pale in comparison. "Treasury's proposals are unfair to working people and their families," AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland said hours after the Treasury announced its package. "While the proposals cut tax rates, workers pay for the cuts with taxes on their fringe benefits. The cosmetic reshuffling of taxes fails to deal with the fundamental needs of the country."

From labor's viewpoint, tax reform that eliminates tax-free fringe benefits is no reform at all. Union leaders negotiated with companies for years to win benefit packages for workers, such as medical premiums and life insurance. Many other workers receive compensation

packages that offer group child care, group legal service and educational expenses paid by the employer as a fringe benefit. After decades of working to insert socially desirable tax breaks into the tax code, labor is reluctant to erase its own handiwork.

As a result, tax reformers' new emphasis on tax simplification receives no meaningful support from most sectors of labor. Endorsement of the Treasury plan by the Service Employees union, and kind words for the plan by the Communications Workers of America, put those two unions in a distinct minority. Labor's strategy has turned defensive, protecting existing tax breaks. Labor—philosophically opposed to the surrender of its tax loopholes and distrustful that any enlightened tax simplification measure could withstand regressive alterations from business lobbyists—has become at best an observer, and at worst an opponent, of current reform efforts.

"They no longer have the political strength to push through what they want," says Robert Kuttner, an author on economic issues and

## THE STORY

a close observer of labor. "So they naturally just try not to lose what they have. Their parochialism reflects their weaker posture generally."

"It's due to a change in the political context," says Doyle Niemann of the Kamber Group, a Washington, D.C. consultant firm to unions. "They talk still about progressive taxation and tax fairness, but the political climate is not as sensitive to those issues right now."

The tensions between the two tax reform camps spotlight the Democratic Party's well-publicized identity crisis. Union leaders interpret the Democrat's self-conscious search for new ideas on taxes and other politics as a rebuke to labor and a desertion from traditional principles of tax reform. Meanwhile, many Democrats who are supportive of fewer tax loopholes and flatter tax rates, believe that labor's defensive strategy on taxes—particularly on the fringe benefit taxation issue—brands the Democrats as a party of special interests.

"There is no single program that is a Democratic program," says Niemann. "Labor is just one part of the Democratic Party, and the party is not providing leadership. If labor wanted to supply leadership—on taxes, for example—the party is less interested in following them. There are no ideas [agreed-upon by all Democrats] for labor to pick up and champion, and the party is less responsive to what labor has to say."

The Democrats' own ideological malaise has prompted labor leaders to sit tight without rethinking their tax agenda. Labor's inertia, however, impedes the Democratic Party from throwing its full energies behind such new versions of tax reform, as the Bradley-Gephardt tax simplification proposal put forth by Sen. Bill Bradley (D-N.J.) and Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.). As a result, labor languishes on the sidelines, fighting the "rear-guard action" described by the AFL-CIO's Cantor. Where labor sees itself as a savvy strategist laying low to protect workers' tax favors until the political climate brightens, others see labor's brand of reform as increasingly irrelevant to the current tax debate on Capitol Hill. "They've taken themselves off the board," agrees Jon Fleming, a tax aide to Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), who is a dependable labor supporter.

Unions' tax policies have traditionally reflected some of the best thinking among liberals. As fundamental reform of the tax code inches its way in 1985 from fantasy to possibility, labor has virtually forfeited its pre-eminent position in the reform movement. Labor's conspicuous absence has left a vacuum that impairs the legislative chances for ultimate tax reform and increases the danger that any measure emerging from Congress will fall short of its populist promise.

"If labor is not going to represent the broad public interest," worried one friend of labor, "who is?"

Jeff Drumtra is editor of *People & Taxes* newsletter, published in Washington.

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# Duarte election win thwarts right wing

By Chris Norton

SAN SALVADOR

**P**RESIDENT JOSE NAPOLEON Duarte's Christian Democratic Party (PDC) is now at the peak of its power, having won a majority of the Legislative Assembly, which was previously dominated by four rightist parties.

Yet all indications are that Duarte, aside from calling for new peace talks with the left—peace talks that most think will go nowhere—will attempt nothing that could provoke the ultra-conservative private sector and the military. They remain the real powers in the country with the potential to destabilize Duarte's government.

The third major power—the U.S., which has the power of the purse strings over the other sectors—is likely to push Duarte for further accommodations with the private sector. The U.S. is eager to find a consensus that will support its main goal—the military containment of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).

Though Duarte continues to be constrained by the military, the right wing and the U.S., the elections splintered the ultra-right. This division should give Duarte more room to maneuver. When the right coalition tried to annul the elections it had just lost, alleging fraud (and making the mistake of suggesting the army had favored the PDC), the Armed Forces top brass appeared on a live nationwide television backing the election results.

The last-ditch move by the right soon crumpled, leaving the right-wing electoral coalition of Arena and the Party of National Conciliation (PCN) fractured. The episode was the most exciting part of elections marked by a notable lack of enthusiasm.

Since this was the fourth time in three years that Salvadorans had to go to the polls, this increasingly futile U.S.-prescribed exercise in democracy had left increasing numbers of Salvadorans cynical.

"People are tired of elections," said one cabdriver. "They haven't done anything here. The ones that have gotten us into this mess are going to get in again."

Price increases have far exceeded the small wage hikes finally granted to public employees last year, and unemployment is high. Thus many Salvadorans with options leave the country.

"People realize that the elections are not a solution to the serious problems the country faces," says one Salvadoran political analyst. "They've voted all these times before and nothing has changed—nothing has gotten better. The war is the major problem, and the elections won't solve it."

The FMLN had called the elections a farce and many Salvadorans appeared to agree—voter turnout was a third lower than predicted, with only one million of a projected 1.6 million voting. And of those who went to the polls, one in six ballots were disallowed.

While many had gone to vote just to get their *cedulas* (I.D. booklets) stamped—which explains the null ballots—many felt secure enough not to go to the polls. This increased sense of security was probably a factor in the PDC win.

"They leave us in peace."

Bambulera is one of thousands of small shantytowns dug into the side of a creek ravine in San Salvador. Plastic hoses take water down from street level spigots to the corrugated tin huts down the gully. Residents agree that Duarte hasn't done much to help them economically.

But, says one shopkeeper, "now they leave us in peace, and for me that's a

change. Before they used to take people away in the middle of the night, and they'd never be seen again."

The PDC has also held on to its traditional following among urban workers and groups like the market women who have directly benefitted from PDC-built marketplaces. For many of them, the PDC populist promises still hold hope for the future. For others the PDC is only the *menos peor*, or the least worst.

Another factor in the PDC victory was a shift in voting in the conflictive zones in the country's eastern and northern regions. These areas had voted for the Arena party in the past two elections and had been expected to continue to support the right parties.

Although the voters there had previously supported the simplistic and militaristic solution advocated by Robert D'Aubuisson and his Arena party, the conflictive zones went for the PDC this time, indicating a support for Duarte's peace initiatives in these war-scarred areas.

Another factor in the right's decline in the conflictive zones was the removal of several ultra-right army officers who had outspokenly supported the right in the last presidential elections. The removal of such blatant rightist intimidation seems to have opened a large reservoir of Christian Democratic support.

The right coalition was also hurt by its lack of control over government ministries, with the accompanying ability to mobilize resources and promise post-election favors. Now the right parties, defeated in the elections and rebuffed by the military, are facing internal splits and will have to go through a period of realignment.

Even before the latest elections five Arena deputies withdrew from the party, and it was no secret that D'Aubuisson's running mate last year, Hugo Barrera, was leaving to form his own party. The fall of D'Aubuisson's star can be traced back to the last year's presidential elections when the U.S. made clear his unacceptability by denying him pre-election visas and by secretly channeling more than \$2 million into his opponents' campaign.

Many in the ultra-right private sector acknowledge D'Aubuisson's central role in fighting the left's imminent rise to power in the early '80s, yet they now realize that D'Aubuisson's historical moment has passed, and he has become a political liability, despite his attempts to moderate his image.

Since the last elections the ultra-conservative National Association of Private Enterprise (ANEP) has eased back from its tight affiliation with Arena. And the private sector is likely to seek new political vehicles—either Barrera's new party or an Arena cleansed of D'Aubuisson.

Arena's coalition partner, PCN, is also fractured. Before the elections, when it appeared that the Christian Democrats would win, the PCN appeared to be hedging its bets by trying to cut a deal based on its

expected role as the swing vote in the Legislative Assembly.

Unexpectedly, when it had appeared that the PDC had won, PCN head Raul Molina surprisingly supported Arena's attempt to nullify the elections—a move later repudiated by the party's executive committee. That controversy now leaves the party split with younger, more moderate PCN leaders like Hubo Carrillo appearing to be ascendent and willing to cooperate with the Christian Democrats.

Originally the U.S. was believed to favor the continued control of the Legislative Assembly by the rightist parties. Right control of the Assembly would have prevented Duarte from implementing any impetuous moves that might cause problems with the private sector and the military.

## A Reagan victory, too.

The U.S., however, denies that it had any favorites—although it did acknowledge that it had tried to block D'Aubuisson last year. At any rate, the Reagan administration should be pleased with the election results: the rightist parties are fractured and in no position to mount a serious threat to Duarte; the private sector seems to have adopted a more pragmatic willingness to

Many Salvadorans realize that D'Aubuisson's historical moment has passed and he has become a political liability despite his attempts to moderate his image.



El Salvador's president Napoleon Duarte greets supporters during recent campaign.

work with the Christian Democrats, who themselves have said they won't attempt any further reforms; and now the U.S. goal of creating a political center is a reality, with the PDC in at least nominal control and likely to strike a deal with more moderate elements of the PCN—a party the U.S. reportedly has long favored.

For the U.S.-backed Salvadoran army, the war seems to be going well, due to massive new amounts of U.S. technology, helicopters, surveillance, etc., as well as improvements in the army itself. Even though the army rarely engages FMLN units, they are systematically harassing them.

The army has also started implementing psychological warfare tactics, imitating the opposition in an attempt to gain the support of the civilian population that doesn't firmly back the guerrillas. The biggest mark against the army is the continuing bombardment by plane and mortars of civilians in the zones controlled by the guerrillas.

But most important to U.S. priorities, the army turned around the FMLN's momentum last year. And while the rebels are far from beaten, the U.S. can now see the possibility of containing them to marginal zones.

The challenge to El Salvador's left, of course, is to renew the political battle in the cities, which it was forced to abandon for armed struggle in the mountains during the right terror in 1980 and 1981. Both the recently reopened National University and the trade union movement are natural channels for left organizing, but they are being carefully watched by the Salvadoran High Command.

And the challenge to Salvadoran aspirations to democracy is whether the military will allow the limited political opening that has occurred to continue.



# INSHORT

Beth Maschinot

## Columbia in chains

"I think what we've done has uncapped a geiser," said senior Laird Townsend of the Coalition for a Free South Africa, as he gestured toward 300 protesters barricading the steps of Columbia University's Hamilton Hall. Since April 4, National Divestment Day and the 17th anniversary of Martin Luther King's death, hundreds of students have kept the main entrance of the building chained shut. The protesters are calling for the University to divest its \$34 million in holdings in banks and multi-national corporations that operate in South Africa. According to its organizers, the blockade, which has received substantial support from faculty, local labor unions, and the Columbia community at large, will continue until Columbia University puts forth a plan for divestiture.

The University's administration wasted little time in taking strong actions that it believed would curtail the blockade. On Easter Sunday, in a secret hearing with Justice Harold Baer of the New York State Supreme Court, the University officials obtained a temporary restraining order against those protesters blockading Hamilton Hall. In addition to this and other legal reprisals under consideration, the students have been threatened with disciplinary action, suspension and expulsion. Yet neither the heavy-handed response of the administration nor the inclement weather has managed to dampen the protesters' resolve. A leaflet distributed by the Coalition for a Free South Africa points out that General Motors and Ford produce vehicles used by the South African military to "forcibly transport blacks from city dwellings to bantustans [barren areas to which blacks are internally exiled]," and IBM supplies the computers that are used "to keep track of blacks under the pass law system."

Convincing the trustees to divest will not be easy since many members of the board have ties to banks and corporations who do business with South Africa. For example, Board Chairman Samuel L. Higginbottom is also chief executive of Rolls Royce Inc., whose parent corporation has extensive dealings in South Africa. There is, however, a precedent at Columbia for such divestment. In the wake of the 1976 Soweto massacre, students pressured Columbia University to divest \$2.7 million from banks with financial connections to South Africa. Since then, despite numerous anti-apartheid activities on campus and a unanimous vote by the University Senate for full divestment in 1983, the Board of Trustees has remained intransigent.

This time at Columbia, seven students began a hunger strike which lasted 15 days. It took the collapse and hospitalization of two of the fasters, one a black South African, before University President Michael I. Sovern agreed to a face-to-face meeting, the precondition for the ending of their fast. During the two-hour exchange, Sovern conceded that investment might be immoral, but refused the student's request to take the lead for Columbia in calling for divestiture. The students took strong issue with a statement made previously by President Sovern that suggested Bishop Desmond Tutu was a friend of Columbia and would support the administration's position. Blockade organizer Taniquil Jones reminded the University President that Bishop Tutu had stated that every American dollar invested in South Africa is a brick in the wall of apartheid. Jones declared that Columbia University had contributed "34 million bricks in this wall." National Divestment Day was marked by rallies and marches on campuses nationwide including Princeton, Harvard, Yale and state universities in Iowa, Michigan, Illinois, Massachusetts, California, Georgia and Wisconsin.

## An upstream battle

The Indians along the Columbia River in the northwest U.S. celebrated their annual salmon festival this past weekend, and Jack Schwartz of the Columbia River Defense Project says the government hopes it will be their last. In the past few years the Indians—who live off salmon fishing in the once-abundant Columbia River waters—have been brought to trial for illegal fish sales in a case that's come to be known as SAMSCAM (See *In These Times*, December 5, 1984). Close to a hundred Indians have been prosecuted, and all but a handful have won their trials. The rest are waiting for a decision on their appeal arguments.

Schwartz says that these are only half-hearted

victories, however. So far the government has been quite effective in attaining their real goal: painting the Indians as willful criminals in order to assure public approval for their removal from the Columbia and for eventually doing away with the fast-diminishing treaty rights altogether. Sometime in the next month the Department of Interior's Board of Indian Appeals will decide whether to evict the Indians from the river, and Schwartz says Indians living on nearby reservations will probably be enlisted to carry out the government's order. He adds that the climate of opinion is so opposed to the Indians that even once-sympathetic environmental groups have bought the government line and have hesitated to deal with the Indians on land-use issues. Last year in Washington state, a proposition abrogating treaty rights with the Indians passed by 53 percent, and it's expected that the state's congressional delegation will attempt to pass a similar bill in Congress. Though Indian supporters doubt that it will succeed this time around, it will help mobilize more anti-Indian support.

Schwartz claims that SAMSCAM was a set-up from beginning to end. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) opened up their investigation of the Indians in 1981 because they noticed the drop off in salmon along the Columbia. But last month the NMFS finished a study showing that aluminum plants along the river are the main cause of the fish decline. Their pollutants have distorted the salmon's sense of tracking necessary for finding their spawning grounds. Schwartz notes that the two companies involved—Martin Marietta and Reynolds Aluminum—have not been prosecuted.

While the Indians vow to resist any eviction attempt, the Columbia River Defense Project has managed to drum up some support in the overwhelmingly hostile climate: Amnesty International has promised to support the Indians as political prisoners if any lose their appeal, and recently Christian and Jewish groups in the community have come to see the salmon rights as a religious freedom issue. Unfortunately, their support

may be too little too late, as SAMSCAM has so successfully resurrected the "bad Indian" once again.

## Time for a rewrite

A two-week strike by the Writers Guild of America, which has traditionally played the role of advance guard on union conflicts in Hollywood, suggests the tensions in entertainment industry organizing these days. With production dispersed to a welter of small entities drawing funds from conglomerate-owned studios, and with new technologies making royalties collection tricky, every contract in the last few years has been an unpleasant exercise in precedent setting. This year the hottest of the agenda items was the question of how much royalties, and out of which pool of profits, writers would be paid in the videocassette market. The bargaining rep for 300-some producing entities came into negotiations with a flat take-it-or-leave-it offer, a gesture that openly mocked the union and triggered a surprise strike decision. Although the union had a formidable weapon—a threat to bring into arbitration a 1973 videocassette sales contract that could have cost the industry hundreds of millions of dollars in back pay—union members settled for much, much less within two weeks. One reason why was the emergence of a dissident faction called Union Blues. Blues leaders accused the union's Executive Director Naomi Gurian of being a political opportunist, while union insiders charged the Blues with being paid stooges for management. Divisions turned bitter; considering as well a mound of stockpiled scripts and the ever-popular trick of scabbing-by-pseudonym, union members accepted a contract that had been slightly sweetened. On this round, though, claims to a better deal in the burgeoning videocassette market fell through.

*This week's contributors: Dennis Bernstein, Pat Aufderheide.*





By Michael Calabrese  
and Michael Kendall

KHARTOUM, SUDAN

**F**OR WEEKS THE SMELL OF A COUP was in the air in Khartoum. Yet when the Sudanese Army overthrew President Gaafar Nimeiri on April 6, the change was still surprising, although long awaited. The coup came as a surprise because Nimeiri had demonstrated an uncanny ability alternatively to co-opt or crush opposition over the course of his 16-year-old regime. But the coup was expected because as Sudan's problems grew over the past few years, Nimeiri gradually squandered his power, acting more erratic and extreme. As the country slid into a desperate famine and civil war, Nimeiri instituted *sharia*, Islamic law, and proclaimed himself an Imam, an Islamic holy man.

Sudan's mushrooming economic troubles finally tipped the coup. It could no longer be contained by the adroit manipulations of Nimeiri and the generosity of American aid. Prior to the takeover there were alternating spells of food shortage and surplus in the markets as the government tried to mask its troubles. Foreign exchange was in such short supply that hundreds of trucks routinely lined up at the docks of Port Sudan, idle because they had no fuel to transport cargo. At the same time shops were full of imported Dutch cheeses and Danish cookies. Finally when thousands demonstrated in the streets against government austerity measures, Defense Minister General Abdul-Rahman Suwar Dahab took power.

Even Nimeiri may have recognized that Sudan's overwhelming problems made his continued tenure unlikely. Just before Vice-President George Bush arrived in early March with a belated warning to tone down the imposition of *sharia* and eliminate consumer subsidies as part of an economic reform, Nimeiri reportedly said, "Any day now I expect a corporal to march in and shoot me."

Nimeiri, who seized power in a military coup in 1969, was overthrown while flying back to Sudan from a visit to the U.S. to discuss the country's economic woes. General Dahab has promised to return the government to civilian control, a pledge that often follows military coups in Africa.

Although the crisis that precipitated the coup may have ended the rule of one of Washington's favorite African dictators, it remains so severe it will be difficult for the next group of generals to deviate too far from Nimeiri's pro-Western path, or to solve many of the country's economic problems.

#### Vying for power.

Unions, political organizations and students organized the street demonstrations that precipitated the coup, and now they want a say in the new government. Their inclusion could add legitimacy to the military rulers. Their exclusion would mean the army—the institution that both produced and deposed Nimeiri—will have to do a better job than Nimeiri, or soon face the same social unrest, magnified by continued neglect.

Sudan receives more U.S. aid than any African nation but Egypt. It is tightly bound to U.S. allies as well. Many of Sudan's skilled workers hold jobs in Saudi Arabia, repatriating hard currency to their families back home. Egyptian troops helped Nimeiri crush two coup attempts in the '70s.

The Reagan administration views the country, Africa's largest, as a strategically important buffer between Egypt and Soviet-aligned Ethiopia. Sudan's long Red Sea coastline runs along the Suez shipping lines across from Saudi Arabia, and offers access to air, naval and listening post facilities.

Nimeiri was so dependent upon American aid that he became one of America's staunchest allies in the Arab world. Sudan supported Anwar Sadat when most of the Arab world ostracized Egypt for participating in the Camp David Accords. Not only did Sudan allow Israel and the U.S. to

evacuate thousands of Ethiopian Jews to Israel over recent months, but relief workers who witnessed the evacuation from the refugee camps reported that Sudanese security personnel helped carry out the operation. The U.S. occupied such a favored nation status in Nimeiri's Khartoum that when the government banned the sale or use of alcoholic beverages as part of *sharia*, the U.S. embassy was the only place in the city allowed to operate a liquor commissary for its personnel.

But Sudan was one of the most beleaguered of American allies. Nimeiri's use of the strict *sharia* angered many Sudanese, especially leftists, non-Muslims and the Westernized middle and upper classes. Under Islamic law the government amputated the hands of thieves, banned co-ed dancing and swimming and was trying to eliminate interest rates from banking.

General Dahab is reportedly close to the Moslem Brotherhood, the rightist group that was pushing for the Islamization of Sudan. In March Nimeiri purged several leading government officials who were Brotherhood members, and arrested scores of their followers, accusing them of creat-

ing a clique to seize control of the government. If the new rulers have the commitment to ease *sharia*, it will be the one major problem that will respond to a quick political decision.

Khartoum's "bread riots" triggered the coup, but southern, eastern and western Sudan all face more serious and long-standing problems, none of which can be solved by a change in generals.

Leftist guerrillas financed by Libya have cut rail, river and road traffic between the Moslem north and the African south, bringing southern Sudan's already fragile economy to a stand-still. Rebels of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) are not strong enough to win an outright military victory, but could continue the war indefinitely.

In the western Darfur and Kordofan regions, nearly one million people have been displaced by famine. Villages were virtually abandoned as families and their flocks strong enough to travel fled east and south in search of scarce water, food and pasture. The country faces both drought and desertification, the growth of the desert onto agricultural areas.

Meanwhile, Sudan's laudable open-door policy has exposed it to a literal invasion of refugees from Chad on the west, Zaire and Uganda on the south and Ethiopia on the east. Sudan faces no land shortage, but as one of the world's dozen poorest countries, it would be ill-equipped even during good times to absorb more than a million destitute foreigners.

While Ethiopian refugees received the most media attention and food aid over the past six months, more than 200,000 Sudanese nomads in the Red Sea Hills in the northeast became what relief workers called the "forgotten people." While trucks carrying food relief to the Ethiopian refugee camps drove within miles of their desert villages, exceedingly high percentages of Beja children under the age of four died of malnutrition and its attendant diseases.

#### Mass starvation.

The plight of the Beja children in the Red Sea Hills is a signal that Sudan, once touted as the future breadbasket of the Mideast, now teeters on the brink of mass starvation. The relief effort got off to an unconscion-

*Continued on following page*

**Gaafar Nimeiri was a political survivor whose ouster was surprising, though long-awaited.**





Continued from preceding page

ably slow start, some relief officials complained, because until a few months ago the government refused to recognize the scope of the approaching famine. Now the U.S. estimates that 4.5 million Sudanese—one-fifth of the population—faces a serious threat of starvation this year.

The magnitude of Sudan's estimated "food deficit" is staggering. Eric Witt, the U.S. Agency for International Development officer in Khartoum, estimates the food deficit for 1985 at 1.9 million metric tons—an amount 10 times greater than all of the food that will be supplied to all Ethiopian refugees in Sudan this year. While 1.1 million tons of relief had been shipped or pledged by early March (80 percent of it through various programs of the U.S. government), this will head off widespread malnutrition only until August unless additional sources are found.

"And if it doesn't rain this summer and there is no harvest again, I shudder to think what will happen to this country come December," said Doug Freeman, development director of the U.N.'s World Food Program in Khartoum. Witt fears that even if above-average rains fall this summer, tens of thousands of Sudanese uprooted from their farms into shantytowns sprouting around cities and along the banks of the Nile, will not be able to respond in time.

Sudan's food gap may widen further if an 18-month drought in the southern regions of Equatoria and Upper Nile continues. Although hunger east of the White Nile in

Equatoria is widespread and has claimed the lives of at least 18 people in recent weeks, millions in the northern and western parts of the country are in worse shape.

Some western relief officials in Juba, the south's major city, speculated that the central government may have been withholding food aid to prevent it from helping the rebels. The SPLA has been fighting a bush war aimed at overthrowing Nimeiri since late 1983. The coup will not grow more grain, nor bring rain, but it could provide the opportunity for a national reconciliation.

SPLA commander-in-chief John Garang claimed he wanted to replace Nimeiri with a secular socialist state that would guarantee religious freedom and regional autonomy for the south. Garang, a Christian and member of the powerful Dinka tribe, holds a Ph.D. in development economics from Iowa State University. With Nimeiri gone and one of his objectives realized, Garang may show a willingness to negotiate. So far though, all he has done is demand that the new rulers turn power over to civilians quickly, or face continued warfare.

What could also spur the start of negotiations is the fact that recently the war has not gone well for the SPLA. During its recent offensive the SPLA failed to gain either military advantage or popular support in the key southern region of Equatoria. Its tactics have aroused solid opposition among the peoples of Equatoria, who are 40 percent of the south's population.

Mandari tribesmen who fled from

Terekaka, a town 50 miles north of Juba, described an incident in January when more than 1,000 SPLA fighters went on a rampage there, stealing cattle, raping women, destroying shops and turning the Catholic church into an outhouse. Similar stories filtered back to Juba after retreating bands of SPLA fighters regrouped to attack villages in the Mongalla district, just 30 miles north of Juba, on March 15.

One member of the Mandari tribe, interviewed at a village north of Juba, said men from his tribe successfully fought off the rebels with poison-tipped arrows and a few captured Kalashnikov rifles. He took his wife away from the Terekaka area after suffering a bullet wound in his right arm.

Regional government and Western relief workers in Juba hotly contested SPLA statements and recent press reports that claim the rebellion was sparked by the imposition of *sharia* or by a rekindled popular desire among Africans to gain independence from the predominantly Moslem north.

"That is untrue. There is no *sharia* here," said Joseph James Tombura, governor of Equatoria and a former president of the south before its division into regions in 1983.

Tombura, Dr. Pacifico Lolik, speaker of the Equatoria Regional Assembly, and other officials and citizens viewed in Juba insist the SPLA's leadership is primarily motivated by a determination to reassert the predominance the majority Dinka tribe lost after the central government divided the south into three regions two years ago.

Dinka officials in Juba, then capital of the south, were stripped of their posts and most members of the tribe were deported to their tribal homelands in the less developed Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile regions.

Leaders of the indigenous tribes of Equatoria generally supported regionalization. They argued the entire south had fallen under the domination of a Dinka elite they accused of rampant corruption and nepotism.

The inter-tribal character of the current conflict distinguishes the SPLA, which is predominantly Dinka with a smaller number of Nuer and Shilluk fighters, from the Anya-Nya movement that fought a 17-year secessionist war with far broader support from the south's many tribes.

The present civil war is not only draining the already bankrupt treasury, but is also preventing tapping of the South's tremendous potential for growth. "The infrastructure is like a century ago. Everything was built in the north, nothing here," said Gerard Viguie, field officer for the U.N.'s World Food Program in Juba.

Tombura and Lolik agree with the SPLA's charge that the central government has purposely tried to keep the south undeveloped. SPLA sabotage caused Chevron to stop drilling for oil in the south after Nimeiri opted to locate the oil refinery in a Moslem region further north. African students are virtually locked out of Sudan's universities, because they frequently fail the tough Arabic proficiency examination required for admission. And other youth find it difficult to find employment outside of the agricultural sector because of the lack of development, a situation that creates a pool of recruits for the SPLA.

No matter how the government tries to deal with *sharia* and the insurgency, Sudan's economic troubles leave it no option but to continue its pro-American line. Time and again, the U.S. has proved the more generous of the two superpowers in Africa. Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia all aligned themselves with the Soviet Union in the '70s, and mortgaged minerals, agricultural goods and future earnings to pay for East bloc military aid. Ethiopia did so after a military committee overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie, reversing decades of American sponsorship.

When drought and famine ravaged these countries in recent times, they found little succor in the East. And the West, especially the U.S., provided food, trucks and other aid. The U.S. has rushed additional amounts of economic aid to the new rulers to shore up the country's stability. Sudan's last government, however, found it could not weather its economic troubles, even with the bounty of hundreds of millions of dollars in American aid. Unless he widens his political base or implements some quick reforms, General Dahab will fare no better.

Michael Calabrese and Michael Kendall have travelled extensively in Africa, writing about famine and economic issues.

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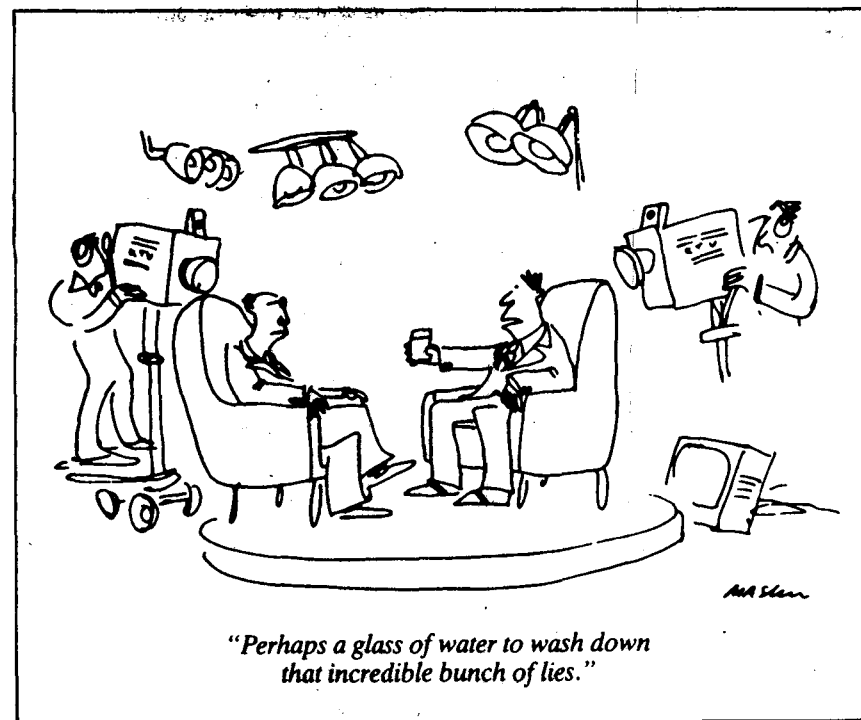
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## ITALY



# Red Brigades boosts rightists

By Diana Johnstone

ROME

**O**N MARCH 27 TWO RED BRIGADES assassins murdered 44-year-old economist Ezio Tarantelli as he was about to leave Rome University campus after teaching a morning class. The choice of victim, the timing and political context of the crime raise one apparently unanswerable question: are the latest batch of Red Brigades killers witting or unwitting agents of rightist forces? Are they crazy fanatics who actually imagine that they are furthering some sort of revolution? Or are they working for the latest incarnation of the P-2 network, whose role in controlling Italian society has been exposed but which has never been convincingly dismantled?

The evidence all seems to favor the first hypothesis. But the second is the one that makes sense.

Supposing that the Red Brigades are what they claim to be—that is, crazy fanatics—their motive in gunning down the professor was to take part, in their own special way, in the current sharp social struggle in Italy over the relation between wages and prices. In Italy this struggle has centered on the *scala mobile*, the sliding-scale system designed to protect wage earners' purchasing power from inflation. In line with prevailing Western policies aimed at "reducing labor costs to attract investment," the five-party coalition government headed by Prime Minister Bettino Craxi has gone all out to break the *scala mobile*. The government campaign has also been used to break the unity of the labor movement and isolate the Italian Communist Party (PCI).

The labor split came a year ago when the two labor confederations linked to the government coalition parties—the CISL led by Pierre Carniti and the UIL led by Giorgio Benvenuto—accepted a cut in the *scala mobile* system proposed by the government and the employers association Confindustria, although it had not been accepted by the largest confederation, the CGIL. The government tried to carry the split into the CGIL by urging the Socialist officials of the largely Communist-led CGIL to sign the agreement along with the CISL and the UIL. The agreement called for cutting "four points" from the *scala mobile*, equivalent to about 10 to 15 percent of the system's

defense of purchasing power. As the *scala mobile* then defended something like 65 percent of medium wages, the proposal meant reducing defense of purchasing power to about 50 percent.

The CGIL refused and proposed a referendum on the issue among the workers concerned. Instead, on Feb. 14, 1984, Craxi issued a decree cutting four points from the *scala mobile*.

The CGIL and the PCI have been combatting the decree ever since, with rallies, strikes and, finally, with a successful campaign to hold a national referendum on the issue some time this year.

A few days before Tarantelli was shot, the weekly *Panorama* published a survey indicating that the PCI and the CGIL are headed for an overwhelming victory in the referendum. Asked how they would vote in a referendum to recuperate the points suspended by the government last year, 50.2 percent said they would vote "yes" compared to only 10.1 percent who said they would vote "no." Most of the rest said they had not made up their minds because they had only slight understanding of the issue. Survey analysts said it was scarcely possible all the undecideds would turn out to vote "no."

Thus despite a globally unfavorable relationship of forces, the defenders of the *scala mobile* seem to have been doing astonishingly well—most notably with the planned referendum. They scarcely need to have the Red Brigades defend their cause.

Yet that is what the Red Brigades claimed to be doing, in the tract left at the scene of the crime. "Attack and defeat the Craxi-Carniti-Confindustria coalition, the dominant axis of the reactionary project of the neocorporative social contract," the tract exhorted.

### "Predetermination."

Why Tarantelli? Of course it is easier to assassinate an unprotected professor than somebody with real power and bodyguards. But as representative of the proclaimed target, "the Craxi-Carniti-Confindustria coalition," Ezio Tarantelli was both a rather marginal and peculiarly flattering symbol.

By all accounts Tarantelli was an intellectual with a social conscience who wanted to put his skills as economist in the service of the people and especially of the young unemployed. He and his American wife

Carole Beebe, who teaches English literature at Rome University, returned to Italy in part out of a sense of civic duty. Tarantelli was interested in econometric systems relating wages to inflation.

Considering himself a man of the left, he turned down offers to work for Confindustria and offered his services to the unions—all of them. He enthusiastically proposed his ideas to the CGIL, the CISL and the UIL, and was published in the pages of their reviews.

In the April 8, 1981 issue of the leading daily newspaper *La Repubblica*, Tarantelli outlined his idea for "predetermination of the *scala mobile*." It was much discussed among specialists. In articles following his assassination, notably in the Socialist newspaper *Avanti!*, Tarantelli was virtually identified as the father of the government reform of the *scala mobile*, thanks to his idea of "predetermination."

The title of Tarantelli's 1981 article was: "If inflation doesn't recede, the companies pay," which pretty well sums up the idea. "The rate of inflation foreseen in the next four quarters should be determined by the union, in agreement with the other social partners and in the context of a package of other measures of structural intervention in the economy, with the double aim of guaranteeing purchasing power of real wages and bringing down inflation. If at the end of the year of application of the proposal, the effective rate of inflation exceeds the one foreseen...it would be the companies, not the government as Confindustria has proposed, that would pay the difference."

Pierre Carniti put Tarantelli in charge of the CISL's new research center to work on his idea of "predetermination." Thus the Red Brigades struck down a CISL man considered responsible for the *scala mobile* reform.

But hours after his death, in a conversation with old friend Benjamin Placido reported in *La Repubblica*, Carole Beebe stressed that her husband was not a "party man." She "absolutely" ruled out that he would have, as suggested by much of the media, led a campaign against the referendum. In fact, she said, he would have voted PCI in the May 12 municipal elections.

Tarantelli had continued to propose ideas to all the unions. His latest enthusiasm was the idea of a European fund to aid the unemployed that would also be the first major

use of the European currency unit ECU.

"The role of Tarantelli in the whole matter of *scala mobile* is now being largely overestimated," Bruno Trentin of the CGIL said a few days after the assassination. The 1984 government decree had "nothing to do" with Tarantelli's idea of making the companies pay for inflation. "And the paradox is that in the 1984 discussion, the CGIL perhaps supported a solution which was in fact closer to the original Tarantelli ideas than others." It was the government and the other unions, not the CGIL, that decided to cut out the part of the Tarantelli proposal that would oblige employers to make up lost wages if inflation exceeded forecasts.

### Creation of a martyr.

Surveys show that about a quarter of Italians are uninformed about the fairly technical *scala mobile* controversy. By murdering Ezio Tarantelli, the Red Brigades created a martyr whose image of enthusiastic reformer, pursuing non-sectarian compromise, enormously embellishes the unpopular government decree cutting real wages.

In a front-page editorial in *L'Unità* March 29, PCI Secretary Alessandro Natta wrote that "Ezio Tarantelli's blood was still fresh on the pavement when there immediately broke loose a scandalous propaganda campaign. It was said over and over that the killing of Tarantelli must be the consequence of embittered social conflict caused by the approaching referendum. This is being said polemically against us, but it is less an attack on us than a way to justify terrorists."

"We won't reply by saying the opposite: that the crime stems from the decree that the referendum wants to abrogate," Natta continued. "That would be equally mistaken. Those who are making the connection between democratic social struggle and terrorism are the same ones who, confronted with the violence of the late '70s, put forth the doctrine according to which that violence derived from the absence, or concealment, of social conflict due to the experience of national solidarity."

Natta's point is well taken. The Craxi Socialists, who felt left out or diminished by the "historic compromise" ("national solidarity") between the Christian Democrats and the PCI, were extremely indulgent—and in some cases even supportive—toward the radical fringes somewhere between the far left and actual practitioners of armed struggle, contributing to credit the nation (with special success in some French and U.S. universities) that the power monopoly of the Christian Democrats and the Communists was driving political activists into desperate acts to combat state repression that was wiping out all possibility for political dissent.

Yet in retrospect, it appears more accurate to suggest that real power in the '70s was never in the hands of the PCI but was very much controlled by P-2 and the secret services. During the '70s, the Communists were told that their failure to provide vigorous opposition fed terrorism. Now they are told that their vigorous opposition is feeding terrorism. It is understandable that Natta complains. Craxi shouldn't be able to have it both ways. But having it both ways has been the hallmark of Craxian success.

Police said captured Red Brigades documents showed yet another split in the strategic leadership of the terrorist organization, whose original leaders have long been in prison. The latest quarrel was between those who wanted to join "Euroterrorism" in attacking NATO objectives and those who wanted to attach their actions to domestic social conflict. Journalists allowed a glimpse of the unpublished documents said that paradoxically, the "Euroterrorist" faction had won, and had apparently carried out the killing of Tarantelli to show that it too was ready to link up with domestic struggle. The victorious faction is described by the police sources as pro-Soviet.

Totally isolated from any political movement, Red Brigades murders can only sully the causes they claim to defend. It is hard to believe this is not the real intent. ■



# WORLDWIDE EXCHANGE



**By Joan Walsh**

FREMONT, CA

**D**EBI HOTZE AND CLEOTHA Garrett are glad to be back at work in the renovated General Motors plant that now houses New United Motor Manufacturing Inc., the groundbreaking joint venture between GM and Toyota. Both work in the paint department as sealers, the same jobs they held before GM closed its Fremont plant in March 1982, but the similarities between the old and new work end with the job title. Their tools and techniques are Toyota's and both women went through months of new training, learning their "new" jobs as well as others around them on the assembly line.

Hotze and Garrett are impressed by the Japanese-imported process, which they say gives workers more control of their jobs and more input into the improving the product. The most important symbol: they can stop the line themselves if a problem arises, a traditional taboo in auto plants but not at NUMMI, where "mutual trust" is the labor-management model. "We don't even have to punch a time clock," Garrett notes.

So far, the trust is real, they say. Their "group leader," the foreman in American parlance, is a good guy; he drinks with workers after shift at Chippers, the bar across from the plant. And when problems arise they can discuss it with him or his supervisors directly, instead of relying on a union committeeman, like in the old days. "He even drops by the union hall," says Hotze. "A foreman wouldn't dare do that before."

They have a few complaints about the new system though. No one's entirely happy with their wages, which are \$1 to \$2 below what they'd make elsewhere in the auto industry. They're a little concerned about the loss of seniority and retirement standing they'd accrued as GM workers. Now everyone is a new NUMMI employee, even though 95 percent of the workers hired so far are GM veterans.

And they worry a little bit about their workload. Right now 16 sealers work in a department that used to employ 40 people, a reduction due in part to the more efficient Japanese techniques. But though employment will increase when output jumps—from a leisurely 12 cars an hour now to 60 next year—it will probably just about double, from 1,250 to 2,500.

But both believe their concerns will be addressed in contract talks between the

United Auto Workers and NUMMI management, set to formally begin April 16. "It's all in negotiations," says Hotze, adding hopefully, "everything could change."

The women's perspective illustrates the balancing act the UAW must perform in negotiating its first contract with NUMMI. Its members are unanimously relieved to be back at work. They're impressed by Toyota work methods and technology, even a little excited by the response and respect the company's "Quality Through Teamwork" emphasis seeks to offer.

But they want to see their wages at industry scale and would like some government at least with GM, that means that in the next 10 years to 15 years, they want to see most workers employed in a system that would make them work harder and produce more under the Japanese system, many worry that Japanese ideas of productivity won't translate correctly for an older, racially diverse, male and female American workforce.

The UAW will walk back some raising the expectations of NUMMI to carry on its shoulders. For the union is asked to be a full partner in the unprecedented experiment and has a strong stake in making it work, along the guidelines of NUMMI finally, a little grudgingly, recognized it after almost a year of uncertainty. The UAW is negotiating more than a contract. It has to carve out a role for itself in a system that is to be designed to attract it.

## Three giants.

At NUMMI opening ceremonies April 4, those worries seemed very far away. Speakers from Gov. George Deukmejian to Toyota Chairman Eiji Toyoda hailed the new venture as a partnership between three "giants": GM, Toyota and the UAW. It was Mutual Admiration Day, with UAW Regional Director Bruce Lee paying the "courage and foresight" of Toyoda and GM Chairman Roger Smith, and even saying a few kind words about the Republican governor.

In the recreation area where the speeches were made, the atmosphere was like a high school pep rally. Employees got part of the day off to attend the festivities, and they cheered each dignitary, shouted back "Good Morning," Japanese style, to each speaker, and punctuated the glowing descriptions of NUMMI procedures and prod-

ucts with applause.

When workers applauded even Smith, who presided over the bitter Fremont closing three years ago, it was hard to remember that they were once among the UAW's most militant locals. Some 800 unresolved grievances and 60 challenged firings were pending when the plant closed, and its history was marked by wildcat strikes. One, in 1977, shut the plant for seven days. Layoffs halved the workforce, from 6,000 to 3,000, as the auto industry declined, but Fremont workers rejected the growing calls for concessions. The plant's abrupt closure—it was announced in mid-February and most workers were laid off March 1—seemed to punctuate the industry's concessions demands, which the UAW only narrowly turned that spring. Fremont Local 1364 voted the package down.)

When GM and Toyota began joint venture talks that year, rehiring the old work force emerged as a major sticking point, since Toyota was reluctant to get involved with employees, and a union that had the reputation Fremont did. Though there was no love lost between GM and the union, GM had to at least nominally favor some rehiring agreement, since opposing it would risk a nationwide strike.

Toyota had another reason for recalcitrance: its management was ambivalent about the joint venture, yet was under heavy pressure from the Japanese government to go through with it as a goodwill gesture to stem the protectionist tide in this country. Trouble over the union could provide an excuse for scuttling the deal before it got off the ground.

In the end, Toyota dropped its harshest demand—a no-strike pledge from the UAW. In return the union conceded that a majority, not all, of the NUMMI workers must be Fremont veterans, and that management could consider an applicant's work background, not just seniority, in deciding whom to hire back. Nationally, and within Local 1364, there had been strong sentiment that the UAW shouldn't budge on the seniority issue.

But to union leadership some jobs seemed better than no jobs, and getting in on the ground floor in the GM-Toyota venture could give it an inside perspective on the management techniques that were keeping the union out of plants elsewhere, especially the Nissan plant in Smyrna, Tenn.,

and Honda's facility in Marysville, Ohio. The union was formally recognized by GM and Toyota in September, 1983.

Meanwhile, Local 1364 went into receivership, since after the plant had been closed one year it no longer had pension and health benefits to administer. In dissolving the local, however, the UAW also seemed to be removing a troublesome symbol of past Fremont misfortune. Local 2244 was chartered in 1974, but after the plant's closure in 1976, Local 1364 left behind no identifiable former members, and no identifiable commitments.

## Adapting Western

The central question of the experiment is whether the use of labor-management committees can work here. Along with concerns about the number of men and numbers hired, the NUMMI unprecedentedly set new rules and job classification for the plant, and agreed to a less-than-union wage on the basis of a

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But Nissan's strategy will be to use the model plant as a training ground for workers who, when they return to their own plants, will lead their teams to levels of productivity and teamwork that will improve workers' efficiency and productivity impressed the American team leaders, though some had reservations about whether workers here could match the Japanese pace.

One NUMMI team leader, Bob Scott, expressed those doubts publicly and was subsequently fired. Management denies any connection between Scott's firing and his opinions, citing "poor job perfor-

## Workers rate job satisfaction high but p





New United Motor Manufacturing, Inc.

mance," but the union has placed his reinstatement at the top of its negotiating demands.

Scott, a safety director at the old Fremont plant, returned from Japan in September convinced that the Japanese had a "good philosophy" about plant organization, but one that "had to be adapted for workers here." While Japanese Toyota employees are mostly young men, the average age of

And differences in tech. Just we're of cars as quickly as they can."

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NAACP, in suit officials contract Scott. We to the bargaining table

Bob Scott working

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#### Thornier issues.

But those are the comparatively easy issues. The thornier ones go directly to the shop floor. The union agreed to a lesser role inside the plant, but is finding that for management less may mean none. NUMMI would like to see union officials conduct union business on their own time—during

breaks, lunches and after work. And it wants to keep elected committeemen out of the team leader-team member relationship.

"Our views on representation are totally different from what theirs are," notes Ed Valdez, a bargaining committee member. That should be no surprise, since in the old days job actions at the Fremont plant always started on the shop floor.

The union would also like to have some say about workload. At peak production, 2,500 NUMMI workers will turn out more than 200,000 cars annually. At 80 cars per worker, that's about 60 percent more than most GM workers produce but typical of Japanese plants. The UAW wants to push NUMMI to hire more workers as the line speeds up, but won't say how many or how fast.

#### Central contradiction.

But pushing on the representation and productivity issues will bring the UAW to the contradiction of Japanese labor relations: the emphasis on worker involvement and control is only a means to greater efficiency, productivity and profit—goals that are not meant to be bargained about.

The whole team concept, for example, which personalizes work relations and builds a sense of belonging, is designed to foster productivity by encouraging pride in team performance and competition. Team output and attendance figures are kept publicly—already at Fremont colorful posters advertise each team's daily record—and peer pressure is meant to replace supervisory pressure in pulling shirkers into line. Work not done by one team member, after all, has to be made up by the others.

The result in Japan, to the country's admirers, is a marvel of labor-management consensus. To the skeptical, it has produced a passive workforce, powerless against management demands because of a false sense of belonging and a fear of peer disapproval. *Japan in the Passing Lane*, the diary of a left-wing Japanese writer who takes a six-month job at Toyota, is an openly partisan book, written to indict the country's company unions and workers' "false consciousness."

But the book's descriptions of speedups, mandatory overtime and arbitrary transfers, meekly accepted by "team members" under heavy pressure to conform and produce offer a counterbalance to NUMMI's cheer-

ful promises of Quality Through Teamwork. Ironically, though many workers retain a healthy distrust of GM, they look to Toyota as their buffer in the venture, despite the company's dismal record on speedups and productivity in Japan.

Muto Ichiyo, director of the Pacific-Asia Resource Center in Tokyo, sounded the most dire warnings about the UAW's cooperation with Toyota. He visited Fremont last year and consulted with the union, and left skeptical of claims that the UAW can adapt Japanese management techniques to more independent, even militant, American workers. That the UAW is participating in screening and hiring new employees "is a dangerous sign," he believes. "They're taking on the responsibilities and qualities of management, and they're out Toyota."

Now that the ribbons are cut and cars are rolling off the line—80 four-door Chevy Novas a day, to be sold in the Midwest this year for \$6,800 to \$7,200—what are each of the three "giants" getting from the venture? Toyota recoups American goodwill, by investing in an economy that has provided it so much profit, at a time when many are clamoring for limits on Japanese imports. It also gains experience with American labor without committing itself to a large independent venture—which if NUMMI works out, is certainly in the cards.

GM gets a first-hand look at Toyota's innovative manufacturing techniques. The \$70 million Japanese-built stamping plant is the most modern in the country, requiring two workers per line to do work performed at other plants by 10 or 12. In the welding section, there are 149 robots where there used to be 12.

But significantly, engines and transmissions will be imported from Toyota in Japan, depriving GM of exposure to that technology. Without a doubt GM's most significant benefit will be seeing whether flexible Japanese labor organization proves a workable management model in this country.

Even if it works, GM may well be overstating the importance of a docile workforce to Japan's enviable auto industry. As Japan expert Ronald Dore writes in his 1982 introduction to *Japan in the Passing Lane*, "The big difference in [Japanese] efficiency—what brought the number of man-hours required per vehicle in 1979 down to 53 per-

cent of the 1970 figure—is the enormous volume of capital investment in new equipment in Japan, and the devoted ingenuity with which Japanese engineers have learned to get the most out of it." The NUMMI venture will impart little of that to GM.

For its part, the UAW gets a chance to prove it can adapt to a changing auto industry, and that it has something to offer workers even under the "cooperative" Japanese system. "I think a successful conclusion to negotiations here would be an organizing plus in our efforts in Smyrna and Marysville," says Lee.

But some wonder if the union has given up too much for that foothold. "I hope workers in the U.S. can learn to control the team concept, instead of being controlled by it, but I'm not optimistic," says Joe Regacho, a UAW member formerly employed at the closed Mack truck plant in San Leandro, now active in the Oakland-based Plant Closure Project. "It's incredible to me that the union would allow people to go to Japan and learn techniques that will undermine its own grievance procedures."

Cathy McPherson, another UAW member active with the Project, echoes his criticisms. She points to the 10,000 GM workers in Delaware and Georgia who will lose jobs as GM phases out the Chevrolet Chevette to make room for the Novas it produces in Fremont. "They could be selling out members who have jobs under a master agreement," she notes.

But William Usery, a labor-management consultant who negotiated the UAW's recognition by NUMMI, thinks the agreement marks a necessary recognition by the union "that it's time for new ideas in labor relations." Usery, a Labor Secretary under Richard Nixon, points to general employee satisfaction with the way the plant is run, and thinks the union will have to make some concessions on wages and representation in exchange for "job satisfaction and respect in the workplace."

That may not go over well with the rank and file, which seems to want NUMMI satisfaction at GM salaries. A Local 2244 membership survey is finding workers concerned about pay scales and their below-average benefit package. "People like the new system—we like the system," DeJesus says. "But they want to be rewarded in the old way, with wages and benefits." ■

Paychecks low at joint GM-Toyota plant in Fremont, CA.



# LETTERS

*In These Times* is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

## Still alive

I'M WRITING IN REFERENCE TO DAVID Moberg's analysis of the AFL-CIO's (ITT, March 13) Committee on Evolution of Work Report. Some general points will follow, but first I must correct an error. David referred to two Industrial Union Department organizing programs cancelled in the past few years for lack of funds. We did cancel one project—for a variety of reasons—in the Baltimore/Washington area. We have not cancelled any other programs in recent years. Our Coordinated Organizing Program now maintains field offices in Atlanta, Georgia; Tupelo, Mississippi; Huntsville, Alabama; and Charlotte, North Carolina.

Tupelo was the sight of an experimental organizing program initiated in 1979. Our organizing activities in that area remain strong. Our Atlanta area program has also been the site of significant experimentation with new and different techniques in organizing. So far in 1985, we have won seven campaigns and lost none, and have two elections this week that we expect to win. These victories come through hard work, traditional one-on-one contact and shop floor action, coupled with the most innovative approaches we can devise. Organizing is difficult—there is no blueprint or substitution for hard work and creativity.

Otherwise, I thought Moberg's analysis was fair, although predictably cynical. The ideas and proposals expressed in the AFL-CIO's report represent an honest appraisal of where we're at and where we're going. The report issued by the Committee on Evolution of Work is an exciting document reflecting the need for change, the willingness to change, and proof that sound analysis and creative thinking is alive and well in the American labor movement.

—Joseph B. Uehlein,  
Coordinator, Special Projects/  
Coordinated Campaigns  
Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO

## Friend and FOE

ALTHOUGH WE REGRET THE ATTENTION given our frailties as opposed to our virtues, we appreciate Joan Walsh's article on Friends of the Earth (FOE) (ITT, April 3). I can report that independent counsel will be looking at the severance problems and that the boards of FOE and its foundation are clarifying procedures so as to avoid recurrence. And limited through our resources may be, we'll try to see that employees who work long and hard get something more than a farewell party when they leave. That mine is the only pension provided so far worries me, even though mine is but a fraction of what my various honoraria and royalties per-

mitted me to contribute to FOE. That good luck should not be the criterion for retirement benefits.

May I try to kill the myth, repeated by Joan Walsh, that Grand Canyon ads had anything to do with my departure from the Sierra Club staff? Thanks to the club's loss of tax status in that controversy, its membership surged. A later ad, calling for an Earth National Park, created problems, even though it was something I was authorized to do. My running unsuccessfully for the Sierra Club Board in order to change Board policy on Diablo Canyon nuclear plans required my walking the plank.

What happened to our publishing program is a long, separate and painful subject. It was put on the block to produce fast cash to cover deficits I firmly believe were caused by heavy staff and program cuts in 1980. FOE badly needs a publishing renaissance if we are to talk to others than ourselves.

That the earlier FOE program consisted of fiefdoms protected by their relationship with me would seem to be based on evidence I don't recognize. It would be better to say that I was lazy, and believed in delegating to talented people, and basked in the excellence of their work.

Let anyone think we are not seeking further funds and a restored and growing membership, let it be known that our debt is still where it was—and will be until old members return, new members are added, and tax-deductible grants are made for the many fine programs the Friends of the Earth Foundation is ready to administer funds for. If any of your readers are not interested in helping FOE's renaissance, please explain. Otherwise please write us for further details at 1045 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94111, or telephone (415) 433-7373.

—David R. Brower  
Chair & founder, Friends of the Earth  
San Francisco, Calif.

## Irresponsible

I WAS VERY UPSET TO READ "OAKLAND Left Out" (ITT, March 26). Why do you bother gossiping about how well or badly a campaign may be doing? I can read that in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

In ITT I expect to find something that deals with the issues that face the people of Oakland, an analysis of the situation Oakland finds itself in. I thought the voters were supposed to decide who wins or loses an election.

The article, in addition to its doom-and-gloom tone, contains several imprecisions: "...with the outcome of the race a virtual certainty" is an irresponsible statement. Apparently, Lionel Wilson, the incumbent Mayor, is not convinced since he is unwilling to risk appearing in public with Riles and debate. The Mayor has

cancelled every date for which he had been scheduled.

The ITT article also claims Riles' support has narrowed but does not explain in what way. The union endorsements have been rolling in. I would claim that Riles' base of support is broadening.

Hannah Ziegellaub  
Oakland, Calif.

## Boy meets tractor

I HAVEN'T SEEN SUCH A SNIDE REVIEW OF a Woody Allen movie since Irwin Silber used to write for *The Guardian*. Pat Aufderheide's attempt (ITT, April 3) to project the author's "self-pity" into a film which nicely explores the fiction/fact dynamic of Hollywood is the worst kind of psycho-criticism. Maybe this wasn't Woody's best effort, but it was a darn sight better than most Hollywood fare. And for those of us who spend so much of our time and efforts trying to cope with the serious world of politics and life, good solid humor by Woody is a welcome breeze. Lighten up, Pat. It weren't that bad, now was it?

—Daniel Graham  
Chapel Hill, N.C.

## NPR

R.B. DUBOFF OF BRYN MAWR, PA., CITES a "profound shift to the political right" in National Public Radio commentators and urges readers at *In These Times* to discontinue support for National Public Radio and public broadcasting in general (Letters, March 27).

There has been no such profound shift. While DuBoff notes that former White House aide David Gergen and John McLaughlin of the National Review appear frequently on National Public Radio, no mention is made of other, equally frequent commentators whose political views differ substantially from those of Gergen and McLaughlin, e.g., Michael Harrington, Nancy Amidei, Tom Noyes, and Askia Muhammed. The purposes of National Public Radio commentators is to present interesting and diverse points of view on matters of major public interest. National Public Radio has always attempted to maintain a balanced roster of commentators and continues to do so. Mr. DuBoff claims to hear a different, more lenient treatment of conservative spokesmen on National Public Radio programs than the treatment of spokesmen for the left. I do not detect such distinction and doubt that many of National Public Radio's listeners do.

Public radio's appeal for listener support is not based on partisanship. We strive to produce a thoughtful, probing examination of the news which several million Americans prefer to commercial broadcast journalism. We advance no party line, no partisan position. For that very reason, not in spite of it, our stations still merit the contributions of our listeners.

—Robert C. Siegel  
Director, News and Information Programming  
National Public Radio

## Abandonment

LEHMAN WEICHELBAUM'S REVIEW OF David Wyman's *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust*,

1941-1945 (ITT, March 27) courageously addresses how, in Weichselbaum's words, "American Jews...failed their trapped European kin." But Weichselbaum apparently is unaware of the complicity of American Zionists in blocking rescue attempts. Politely understating their opposition to an Allied response of Europe's Jews, he observes that "the Zionists...made the rescue issue a distant second choice to...the priority for a post-war Jewish commonwealth in Palestine." While coming down hard on the U.S. and Britain for "blocking virtually all attempts at large-scale rescue of Jews," he blames Roosevelt as a "do-nothing" on this issue.

The record of history, however, offers a different perspective. Alfred M. Lilienthal's *Zionist Connection II* suggests a different reality: Roosevelt, aware of Nazi oppression of Jews, tried to convince the British to accept 100,000 to 200,000 Jews, feeling that Canada, Australia, and South American nations would follow suit, at which point Congress could be "educated to go back to our traditional position of asylum" in Roosevelt's words. He dispatched Morris Ernst, a Jewish New York lawyer to London to see if the British would go along. An elated Ernst returned to tell FDR that Britain would "match the U.S. up to 150,000 Jewish immigrants. At first, Roosevelt enthusiastically backed the idea, but a week later told Ernst "Nothing doing on the [rescue] program. We can't put it over because the dominant vocal Jewish leadership of America won't stand for it...The Zionist movement knows that...they can raise vast sums for Palestine by saying to donors 'There is no other place this poor Jew can go.' But, if there is a world political asylum, then the people who do not want to give the money will have an excuse to say 'What do you mean there is no place they can go but Palestine? They are the preferred wards of the world.'"

Shocked, Ernst refused to believe Roosevelt and began to lobby influential Jewish friends for this world rescue program. But as Ernst reports in his book *So Far So Good*, "I was thrown out of parlors of friends...who very frankly said, 'Morris, this is treason. You are undermining the Zionist movement.'" Lilienthal reports that Ernst encountered the same reaction among all Jewish groups and their leaders. Thus ended Roosevelt's effort to rescue Europe's Jews.

Lilienthal suggests that Zionism was cognizant of the effect the Holocaust would have in uniting Jews everywhere behind the goal of a Jewish State in Palestine and muting criticism from Jew and non-Jew alike. Weichselbaum cites in passing Ben Hecht's *Perfidy*, but Lilienthal draws actual examples from it that suggest that Zionists like future Israeli leaders Rudolf Kastner and Chaim Weizmann betrayed Europe's Jews.

—Dino Joseph Drudi  
Washington

## Correction

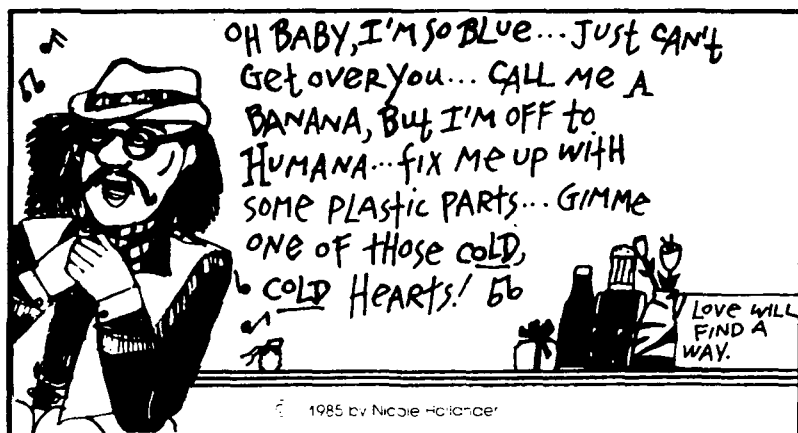
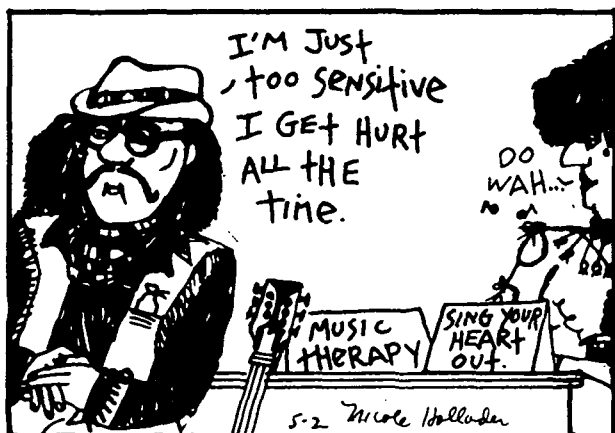
The photograph accompanying last week's story on Native American television lost its credit. Photograph was by Victor Masayesva, Jr.

## Correction

In "AMA: Yes, MASA" (In Short, April 3) the estimated ratio of doctors to blacks in South Africa was incorrectly reported as one to 1,900. The actual figure is one to 91,000, and this doesn't include the bantustans.

*Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.*

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander





## Soviet newsletter

By Alex Amerisov

**T**HE SOVIET ECONOMY, according to "results" just published, has done very well in 1984. Although national income went up only 2.6 percent, industrial production rose by a decent 4.2 percent. The lag was in agriculture. The urban labor force increased by .6 percent, but its productivity grew at an impressive 3.8 percent resulting in a real per capita income gain of 3 percent. The supply of consumer goods increased by 5.8 percent.

Foreign trade expanded by almost 10 percent and overall was balanced. The Soviet Union ran a surplus with such countries as England, France, West Germany and Italy and a deficit with the U.S. and Japan. (Previously, Japan ran a deficit in trade with the Soviet Union.) There were 12.9 million people engaged in farming or about 10 percent of the total labor force, a long way from the days when the majority of people were rural.

The way Soviet people work is changing too. About 70 percent of all workers are now members of *brigades*. The brigade method is characterized by a single job assignment with pay for final results to be distributed among the members of a brigade by themselves. Observance of certain legal requirements in the payment distribution and hiring of new members is, of course, required. The average worker's wage was 185 rubles per month in 1984. Farmers made on the average 145 rubles, plus whatever came as the result of their private activity. Including fringe and social benefits, the average employee's income was about 260 rubles per month. This is equivalent in goods and services purchased to \$1,200-\$1,500 per month in the U.S.

Last year, for the first time, direct income supplements (welfare payments) were instituted for working low-income families with children. The government has finally decided to respond to the needs of such families. And it is implicitly recognizing income disparities that have developed in the past 30 years.

Kindergarten teachers were reclassified and their incomes and status were raised to that of regular teachers. A six-hour working day was established for them and they will be entitled to an extended vacation of 36 working days per year.

Expenditures for preservation of the environment have increased. Altogether, nine billion rubles were spent in 1984 for such purposes. But this includes expenses of reforestation, which should be borne by paper, pulp and furniture-making companies.

### Soviet education.

More than 106 million Soviet citizens were going to various schools last year. Of them,

more than 400 million have taken advanced training and skill improvement courses. About 60 million people have visited sanitariums, resorts, vacation homes, tourist bases, the majority at little or no cost. Many more vacationed as "savages," i.e., at their own expense and outside of any health organization.

The population of the USSR is 276.3 million people. In the '60s, the Soviet birth rate began to decline. Today's birth rate is not sufficient to maintain social replacement.

Soviet parents place great importance on their children's education. Seventy-three percent of those recently surveyed feel it essential that their sons go to college, while 63 percent have the same attitudes about their daughters. Three percent feel that high school is enough. (In the U.S., sex preference is more lopsided and a higher percentage feel that high school is enough.)

### Soviet elections.

Here are some results of the recently held Soviet "elections," which took place on February 25. Of the 185,321,639 registered voters, 185,289,464 voted or 99.98 percent. All candidates were elected. There were 82,492 voting against official candidates. Voting against a given candidate is the only choice a Soviet citizen has to show disapproval. The other "choice" is casting an empty ballot or not voting. A write-in option is very seldom exercised out of fear of persecution and also because no effective write-in campaign is possible.

### Soviet Jews.

The suffering of Soviet Jewry continues. More than 270,000 Jews left the Soviet Union during the last 15 years. All of them have families back in the USSR. With very few exceptions, none are allowed to visit even their closest relatives. These people are made to suffer for the rest of their lives because they could not stand the vicious anti-Semitism of Soviet internal policies. There are no appeals, no juries—the whole procedure is strictly political. Those who want to return cannot. Those who want to see their relatives cannot. The Soviet government says that all Jews who wanted to leave did so and only 1.6 percent of those who applied are still waiting for approval. This may or may not be true, but this is really not the problem today. The real problem today is the reunification of separated families.

### Health care.

Private health clinics are springing up in the Soviet Union. Until now, if you needed a second opinion there was no fee either for medical or dental services. Now, if you want a second opinion chances are you will have to pay for it. The biggest burden of this change will fall on the sickest and least capable of paying. Free pri-

## PERSPECTIVES

vate hospitals for high party and state officials continue to function as before.

Suicide statistics are not published in the Soviet Union. The fact that the phenomenon exists on a large scale is attested by the opening of suicide hot-lines in Moscow in 1982. The center is staffed by 21 professionals operating 24 hours a day from 13 separate offices. Similar centers have been opening in Leningrad, Rostov-Don, Ufa, Kazan, Gorky and Kharkov—all large industrial cities. Some of the official explanations for the rise in suicides are: improving material conditions create greater need for love, too much information and intense social contacts undermine social stability, insufficient emotional resources of individuals to deal with crises of love, family and relations. In our view, none of these explanations is correct. The real explanation is the increasing sense of purposelessness, similar to that experienced by people—especially the young—in a capitalist society. Growing alienation is the real problem.

### Computers.

The computer age is coming to the Soviet Union, at long last. A recently developed plan calls for all schools to be equipped with computers by the year 2000. Agat, a computer similar to Apple, is currently being sold. No sales to individuals yet. Competition has been declared for the best design of a microcomputer. In the 1985-86 school year, a course on "Fundamentals of Information Science and Computer Technologies" will be introduced in schools for the first time. Most of the teaching will be theoretical for now—no hardware.

The impact of computers on the Soviet society is going to be profound. Every computer is a little printing press. Leaflets of political and sociological nature are going to be plenty. Computers by way of a modem, allow a transmission of information (books and pamphlets) without being detected by police. Methods of surveillance are going to change, but they can't be as effective. Real freedom of press may come soon.

### International relations.

China and the Soviet Union are rapidly improving their relations. For the first time in 20 or so years, China sent condolences Party-to-Party rather than state-to-state after Chernenko's death. Trade rose sharp-

ly between the two countries in 1984. The present Chinese experimentation with new economic policies, containing the "danger of a return to capitalism," are widely reported, but not commented on in the Soviet press.

There are now two peace organizations independent of the Soviet government: Group for Building Trust Between USSR and USA and Independent Initiative. The differences between the two groups are small, mostly of age. Some individuals belong to both. Two years ago, in June 1983, the two groups organized a demonstration against the nuclear arms race, continuation of capital punishment and intervention in Afghanistan. More than 200 people were arrested; most were released. Leaders of the demonstration were either forced to leave, put in detention for a prolonged period of time or continually harassed. The *Soviet-American Review* has a list of 89 names of young people from Independent Initiative who signed a publicly circulated appeal to the youth of America, with a call to build direct linkages independent of either government. Anyone wishing to correspond should send their request, with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to me, care of *In These Times*, and I will send you one name per request. Please include the age of the person you would like to get to know.

It is a bit late, but in 1980 a brochure was published by members of an extralegal "Soviet Socialist Party." It contains some general ideas on Soviet society and a "program of action." The thrust of the pamphlet was the need to abolish a one-party system and turn state power over to its rightful owners—Soviets (Councils of Representatives). The authors described presently existing Soviet society as a bureaucratic state-monopoly semi-socialism and treated it as a transitional stage between capitalism and democratic socialism conditioned by an initial backwardness of Russian society, in which an anti-capitalist revolution took place. The party's slogan, "All Power to the Soviets," is the slogan of the October Revolution and of the Workers Opposition in the '20s. Its ideological foundation: Marxism-Leninism. Its symbol: a red banner with a raised clenched fist. This pamphlet was the only piece of information we were able to get on this new organization.

Alex Amerisov writes a bi-monthly newsletter on developments in the Soviet Union.

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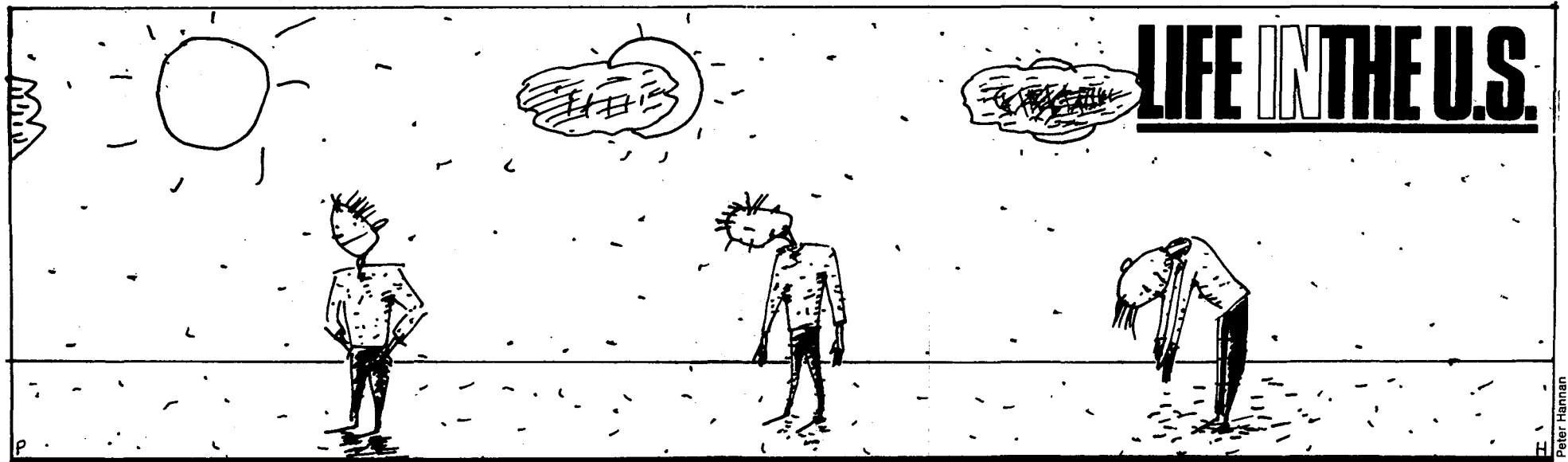
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## THE SUNBELT

# The South's economy is not so sunny now

By Hugh Merrill

**F**OR ALMOST 100 YEARS, THE STATES of the old Confederacy adopted as gospel Henry Grady's vision of industrialization called "The New South." Now, after a century of boosterism and absentee ownership, Grady's dream is being replaced by another round of optimistic sloganeering.

The "New South" has become "The Sun Belt," a mythical land of opportunity that offers exciting new jobs and never-ending summers to chilled, embittered workers from the nation's heartland. But a look beyond the corporate drum-beating and braggadocio of management elite and the South really hasn't changed much—it's still the poorest region in the country with the lowest wages and lowest level of education.

"Sun Belt" talk set entrepreneurial hearts aflutter in 1967 when the phrase was first coined by Kevin Phillips, a political analyst whom *Newsweek* called "the prophet-geographer of the New Right." For a while, it looked as if the South, long the nation's step-child, was finally becoming an equal. But 18 years after the first surge of optimism, Sunbelt prosperity has arrived only in Texas, Florida, parts of Virginia and in some urban areas, like Atlanta.

What has really developed, according to Ray Marshall, Secretary of Labor during the Carter administration and now a professor at the University of Texas, is:

- a South with a heavier concentration of marginal, low-income industries vulnerable to Third World competition;
- a South that suffers from the economic drag of higher levels of poverty and underdevelopment, especially among blacks and in rural areas;
- a South that will have difficulty adapting to new high-technology and informational occupations because of low levels of training, education and productivity; and
- a South facing stiffer competition for jobs from Northern states and an erosion of some of the region's traditional advantage in attracting new industry.

Marshall's assessment has been echoed by a *New York Times* survey that shows manufacturing plants in the rural South—small factories that make up 40 percent of the region's industry—are closing by the hundreds. And in many cases, the factories—which came South seeking low-skilled, non-union employees willing to work for pennies more than the minimum wage—will never open again.

The depression-like atmosphere settling in the South is not apparent in cities like

Atlanta and Charleston, where most new non-manufacturing service jobs are locating. Atlanta got 100,000 new jobs last year while, Southwide, the textile industry alone lost 28,000. The unskilled, poorly educated refugees from these small-town factories have nowhere to go. With increasing foreign competition spurred on by a strong dollar, it's unlikely that new companies will open the factory gates that have been bolted shut.

Two generations ago, during the great depression of the '30s, a Southern worker who lost his job could go back home to the family farm. But in 1985 most family farms have become subdivisions. And whatever skills the unemployed factory workers have, agricultural proficiency is not likely to be among them. When Hank Williams Jr. sings, "A Country Boy Can Survive," he is crooning about a mythological redneck, not the real-life steel worker in Birmingham or the textile worker in Anderson, S.C., who has lost his job and has no prospects of ever recovering.

Of the six states in the country with more than a 10 percent unemployment rate, four are in the "Sun Belt." West Virginia has a 15 percent unemployment rate, Alabama has 11.1 percent of its working population without jobs and Louisiana and Mississippi both have a jobless rate of more than 10 percent. Among non-Southern states, only Alaska and Michigan have double-digit unemployment.

### The old New South.

Henry Grady's New South anticipated a region that would be "the home for 50 millions of people, her cities vast hives of industry; her countryside the treasures from which their resources are drawn; her streams vocal with whirling spindles." For a while it worked. Birmingham with its steel mills became Grady's vast hive of industry; Kentucky and West Virginia were soon the mined countryside.

But Grady never mentioned the region's colonial status. And that, ultimately, caused the downfall of the New South. Birmingham's steel mills were owned in Pittsburgh; profits from Kentucky's coal mines went to New York bankers.

The Mellons and Carnegies and Rockefellers made sure schools in New York were teaching their children; they donated vast amounts for museums, symphonies and art galleries, but their concern seldom trickled to their economic outposts. So the children in their Southern colonies remained uneducated and deprived.

The only real beneficiaries of Grady's New South were former planters who continued to make their living from exploitation. Lillian Hellman offered a true picture of New South greed in *The Little Foxes*, something Margaret Mitchell glossed over and romanticized in *Gone With the Wind*. Listen to Ben Hubbard, one of Hellman's characters, as he talks about bringing industry to Alabama:

"They wouldn't take promises. They wanted guarantees. Water power. Free and plenty of it. Cheap. You'd think the governor of a great state would make his price a little higher. From pride, you know. Cheap wages. 'What do you mean by cheap wages?' I say to Marshall. 'Less than Massachusetts,' he says to me, 'And that averages eight a week.' Eight a week! By God, I tell him I'd work for eight a week myself. Why, there ain't a mountain white or a

town nigger but wouldn't give his right arm for three silver dollars every week... Marshall said that to me. 'What about strikes? That's all we've had in Massachusetts for the last three years.' I say to him, 'What's a strike? I never heard of one. Come South, Marshall.'"

But the Robber Barons like Hellman's Marshall have moved again, this time for even cheaper labor and more favorable governments. In many cases, like the Alcoa plant in Maryville, Tenn., that moved to Brazil, they have moved out of this country and are shipping back third world imports that are forcing their former employees out of jobs and onto poverty rolls.

### Sunbelt poverty.

A study by the Southern Regional Council released this month shows that the number of poor people in the South rose from 9.4 million in 1979 to 12 million at the beginning of 1984. That's an increase of almost 33 percent. And the increase comes, largely, because jobs have disappeared. Until two years ago, for example, textiles manufactured in the South were an item regularly exported to the rest of the world. Now the export market has dried up and more and more textiles are being imported as jobs in the old Southern mills evaporate.

Major retailers like Sears, K-Mart, Penney's and Macy's buy most of their garments from Far-Eastern markets like Hong Kong and Taiwan. "It's not to the retailer's profitable interest to buy American," says Jim Walraven, regional director of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, "And that can only be controlled by legislation."

"We used to ask people to look for the union label. But it's hard even to find clothes made in this country that we'll just ask them to buy American and we'll take our chances," he says. "In a town of 10,000 when the textile mills shut down it's like closing down the town. All that's left is jobs cleaning motel rooms and working in hamburger joints for the minimum wage."

"Everybody's always talking about retraining people for new jobs. But even if they are retrained, there just aren't enough jobs out there. When a plant shuts down there are thousands of people who will probably never find another job, who will never work again," Walraven says.

A poor South is nothing new, of course. Franklin Roosevelt moved to pull the region out of its poverty with the New Deal; Lyndon Johnson did the same with The Great Society. And it worked. In 1975 there were only 8.7 million people in poverty in the South, a drop from 15.9 million in 1959. But now the number is increasing again, and the Reagan administration makes no effort to stop it. As Ray Marshall points out, Reagan's policies are extremely regressive and the South, with its heavy concentration of poor and working poor, is hurt more than any other region. Under Reagan's plan, Marshall says, federal aid to the South will decline from 25 percent of state and local budgets in 1980 to three or four percent by 1991.

And, Marshall says, while the huge Reagan military buildup will mean a 37 percent increase in federal spending for the Pacific States, the South will only see about five percent of the new defense money—less than any other region in the country. ■

*Hugh Merrill is a journalist based in Atlanta.*

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**Forces of Production: A Social History of Industrial Automation**

By David F. Noble  
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**Work Transformed: Automation and Labor in the Computer Age**

By Harley Shaiken  
Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 306 pp., \$17.95

**Beyond Mechanization**

By Larry Hirschhorn  
The MIT Press, 187 pp., \$17.50

By David Moberg

THE IDEA OF MACHINES automatically doing our work touches primordial dreams and nightmares.

For those who work, it extends to the limit all those ways of making work less burdensome, freeing them for doing whatever they most enjoy. For those who are their masters, it is the dream of the perfect slave—completely obedient and reliable. Yet this fantasy carries with it the specter of rendering human workers unneeded, of creating a soulless tyranny and of depriving people of the creativity and craft that is the other side of work's drudgery.

The changes now being wrought in work by computerization, especially microcomputers, by robots and by other steps in automation are dramatic. But as all these books recognize in varying ways, the evolution of technology is more than a technical question: existing social relations shape technology, which in turn influences relationships among people. Although the debate may be about machines—gig mills and shearing frames for early 19th century Luddites in England or computers and robots today—in most cases workers are really concerned about what happens to their livelihood, skills, identity and values. Machine-smashing Luddites—certainly not the know-nothing opponents of "progress" as they are usually portrayed—were less upset about the new machines than about the new factory system that disrupted their moral order and deprived them of work.

University of Pennsylvania researcher Larry Hirschhorn is the most optimistic of these three writers about what can be expected from work in the computer age. The age of mechanization—based on standardization, continuity in production, severe constraints to minimize deviation and the reduction of work to simple labor—was ushered in with the steam engine, as Hirschhorn summarizes industrial history. Workers became cogs in a vast supermachine.

But gradually inventions such as the electric motor and, most important, the vacuum tube relax some constraints in early steam-powered mechanization. As new process industries, such as oil refining, emerged, the mechanical model was changed further. Rather than attempt to eliminate all error, production engineers used delicate sensing and feedback devices to compensate for error. Absolute constraint became less important in pursuit of continuity, but the demands of work changed again.

If mechanization often stripped workers of skills and put them in straitjackets, the post-mechanization technology threatens to make them mere dial-watchers or less. Yet Hirschhorn is convinced that in these cybernetic systems work-

ers remain crucial. In order to compensate for error, which can grow in significance with complex, automated systems (witness Three Mile Island or the air controller network), workers must be constantly learning, thinking imaginatively and exercising judgment. Under the pressure of the new technology and a new market emphasizing variety and quality (rather than cheap mass production), the old industrial culture will give way to workplaces of salaried teams rotating among jobs, evaluating peers and working with minimal direct supervision, Hirschhorn believes.

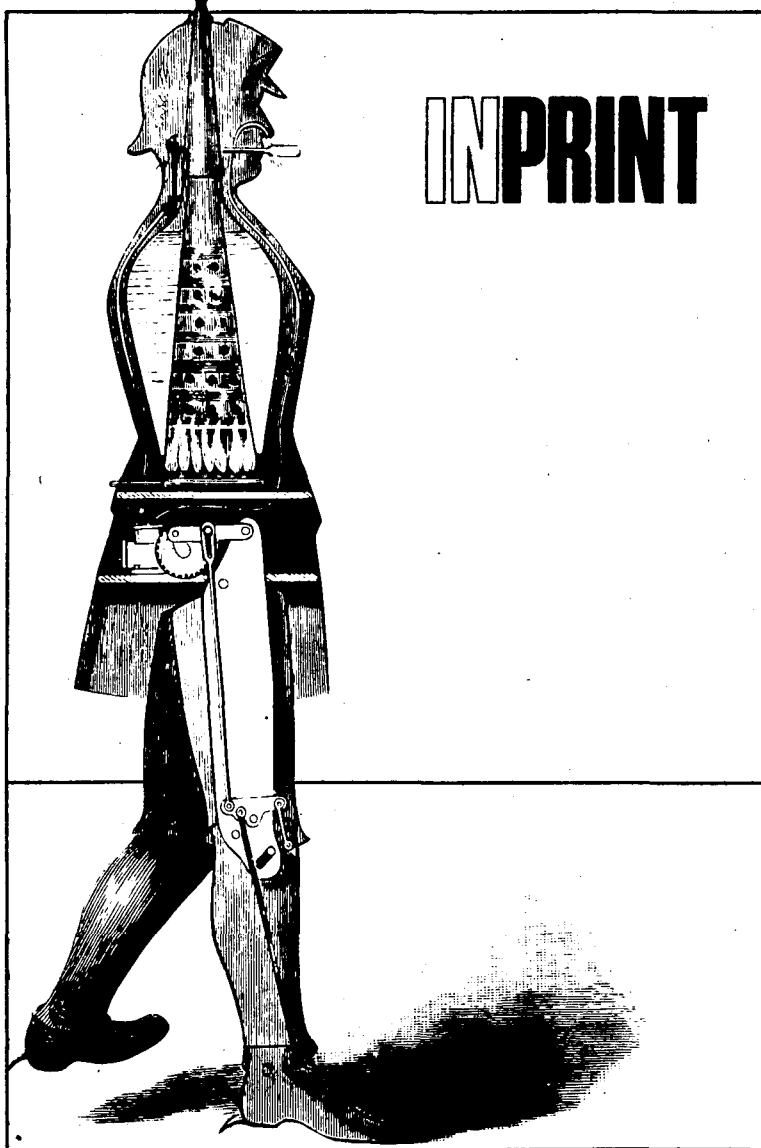
Historian David Noble, author of *American By Design*, has much less faith in some inexorable march of technical progress. Not only the use of tools but their very conception and design, he argues, is shaped by the interests of those in power. Quite frequently their overriding interest is reinforcing their control (and capitalists will even endanger profitability to do so), Noble writes. He argues that there is an abiding dilemma for the capitalist: dependent as workers may be on him for a job, the employer must still find a way of motivating those workers to do their tasks well. Even when employers do everything to strip workers of the skills that give them power, they find themselves dependent on human initiative, imagination and craft.

Noble focuses on the post-World War II transformation of machine tools, especially the emergence of numerical control (NC). Numerical control replaced the skilled machinist with a coded message giving instructions to a lathe or other metal-cutting machine. In great detail Noble shows how the partly independent but mutually reinforcing interests of the military, universities and management not only sped the development of NC tools but also determined their character.

The ideal for all three powerful institutions was to take as much of the control over machining off the shop floor and put it in the planning offices of management and its allies, the engineers and computer programmers. The favored systems did just that, despite questionable economic advantage and many technical difficulties.

With numerical control, engineers and computer programmers with no practical knowledge of cutting and grinding metal planned the work abstractly and formally. Yet there was another system, called record-playback, that used the skilled machinist to provide the record of movements for machining future parts. It was like using a player piano to record a master pianist's performance. As is true in much of the history of

*The questions of technology can only be answered by being clear about our social goals.*



## AUTOMATION

# Manual labor in a machine future

technology, the skills of an individual worker would be "captured" by a machine. But the worker would still be central to production.

Noble makes a strong case that record-playback had many advantages over numerical control and could have been more inexpensively and readily adopted by machine tool shops. (Indeed he suggests that Japanese reliance on "open-loop" systems that included rather than excluded the operator may have helped them originally gain their now overwhelming position in the U.S. machine tool market.) But the Air Force—which is now in the vanguard of promoting the fully automatic factory—was footing the bill for development, and it had technical requirements far beyond what was relevant in most shops. And MIT researchers had a stake—intellectual, institutional and pecuniary—in computer-based numerical control. Management, too, was lured, despite great problems with NC, by the prospect of eliminating skilled workers.

### The impossible dream.

But that dream has not materialized. As Noble and Shaiken both point out, the successful operation of NC tools requires skilled operators, ready to adapt to problems that are often amplified by the new, complex systems. As NC was introduced, management often fought to use less-skilled workers at lower pay. But that led to worker discontent and inefficient use of the much more expensive machines.

Shaiken, a machinist turned MIT researcher, shares much of Noble's perspective on NC development but is more optimistic about its potential. Yet he argues

that technological potential is stymied by management insistence on control, which brings not only a moral cost but a loss of potential productivity. Noble seems even more convinced that NC did not and does not make economic sense. Military priorities, scientists' arrogance and managerial assertions of power propelled the technology's development, he insists.

Although much of the new technology undermines the power of workers and their unions—as it was intended to do, Shaiken hopes that unions can still mold the technology, possibly through insisting on a "technology bill of rights," such as one drawn up by the Machinists. But Noble's history is not encouraging. In most cases, unions have simply accepted management decisions about technology and negotiated for damage control and protection of some rights of existing union members. Even people sympathetic to affected workers are likely now to shrug their shoulders, mumble something about "you can't stop progress" and, at best, argue for a shorter work week (which is only part of the response).

Noble makes clear that technology can follow varied courses. There is no rational hand of the market, science or god inevitably guiding it toward efficiency, let alone fairness. In order to represent workers effectively, unions must learn about technological alternatives—just as they must understand investment strategies—and at least be a major pressure along with the military, universities and managers in deciding directions.

Hirschhorn is optimistic that managers will wake up to changes

IN THESE TIMES APRIL 17-23, 1985 13 in the market and technology and, as a consequence, promote the "sociotechnical" workplace. He concedes a small place for unions in making such factories work better, even though most are now non-union. But he tends to view most of the problems that have emerged in these efforts at non-authoritarian workplaces as technical glitches. In a fascinating, detailed history of one failed experiment at a General Electric factory, Noble shows how giving workers greater authority frightened management: the idea could spread and expand, raising the issue of "who's running the shop?"

Hirschhorn framed the issue in terms of an "industrial culture" of mechanization giving way to a new culture "beyond mechanization." Yet the arrangement of work is also framed by the social and economic system, capitalism in our case. As Noble noted, despite greater productivity with factory democracy, limits of the GE experiment "were determined by a consideration far more fundamental than that of profitable production, namely, the preservation of class power."

Ultimately, Hirschhorn and Noble converge on some points, with which Shaiken would undoubtedly agree. The future economy depends heavily on a more highly skilled, flexible, autonomous and continuously learning workforce. But Hirschhorn sees expanded automation as not only the wave of the future but largely as a blessing. (He does not discuss how janitors and fast food servers, who are proliferating far faster than nuclear plant operators, fit this image of future work.)

Noble questions not only the economics but the political desirability of much new technology. And Shaiken takes a middle ground: there is potential for improvement in workers' lives and economic performance that is now thwarted or perverted.

Ultimately, the questions about the technology can only be answered by first being clear about our goals as a society. Whether robots, computers, NC lathes or other tools represent progress or peril depends not only on how they are used, but also on what kind of society and individual citizens as well as products that we want to build with those tools. Our limited public discussion now tends to be inverted, and society is shaped by a technology that appears—yet is not—the autonomous embodiment of rational progress. ■

W. KERRAS PITY SAY  
"NUCLEAR WAR—  
KEEP OUT!"

Saturday, Feb. 23  
Dear President Reagan—  
Well, it's over 6 months now since I declared  
our house & garden at 3 Cherry Drive,  
Canterbury, a NUCLEAR FREE ZONE! Still  
so much to do, what with shoring up  
defence perimeter (garden hedge a weak  
spot, I'm afraid)—acquiring defensive arms  
(my letters about purchase of Harrier jet  
apparently not taken altogether seriously)  
... & writing for advice to Mrs. Thatcher.  
Gen Haig, defense boffins, &cet.  
In fact, I think my letters, and the actual  
replies I've received, make rather a hilarious  
read—so I've put them all together in a book!  
It could make me a hero, a la *The Mouse  
That Roared*! Or maybe it'll be more like  
Monty Python...  
At any event, look for it in your American  
bookshops around Spring, probably with  
some suitably silly title, such as...

THE DEFENSE DIARIES  
OF W. KERRAS  
Edited by David Moberg  
PANTHERON



## By Pat Aufderheide

**A** LAMO BAY, DIRECTED BY Louis Malle, is a film whose American theme, setting and style are developed with the awareness of a foreigner. A social drama with heroes, villains and conflicts over morality—the motor of its plot is racism—it is free of moralism. It maintains a unity between character, class and circumstance; it's a cowboy film about people who think they're living in cowboy films.

The story is drawn from real life. In the last few years, vicious violence has erupted in the Texas Gulf, triggered by white fishermen pinched by hard times and threatened by the growing community of Vietnamese, whose entrepreneurial will and immigrant industry have created competition and, some say, also threaten the entire industry by depleting the fish supply. The conflict has allowed Ku Klux Klan organizing to flourish there, as it has elsewhere recently.

The story begins with the arrival of open-faced immigrant Dinh (Ho Nguyen) to the small fishing village of Port Alamo, but the center of the story is Glory (Amy Madigan). Young but already weatherbeaten, she has come back home to help her ailing father run his imperilled seafood wholesaling business, which buys from Vietnamese. She's still got a passion for her high school heartthrob Shang (Ed Harris), now an unwilling husband and father and about to be dispossessed of his fishing boat. Angry with the "gooks" and "slops" who've moved into the neighborhood, he takes his rage out on Glory's father, his wife and the Vietnamese themselves.

When Shang loses his boat to the local banker ("I'm just doing my job, Shang"), his friends, helped by the local Klan organizer, gang up on the Vietnamese, riding shotgun in the bay, breaking up a Catholic Church service, and stomping Dinh's little dinghy (named, of course, "Glory"). Most of the Vietnamese evacuate the area, and Glory's dad goes to the hospital with a heart attack, but Dinh returns to defend Glory and fight it out, one-on-one, with Shang.

"You may be one of the last cowboys in Texas," Glory says to Dinh, and she's right. Dinh is the American hero that Shang tries to be. He's entrepreneurial, genial and tough in a crunch. The movie is, in fact, not about ethnic conflict so much as it is about the many sides of an American male stereotype. The same qualities that Dinh admires and emulates are those that, under stress, can breed Shang's bigotry and self-destructiveness.

Racism here is no social issue visited on innocents, or a blot on the American character (recall Ronald Reagan riding to Ginger Rogers' rescue in *Storm Warning*). It's the product of a world where political pluralism exists side by side with ideals of frontier individualism, where social tensions are rephrased as moral battles. Shang knows that somebody always has to wear the black hat—Indians, Mexicans, blacks. He isn't ready to turn in his white hat to a new frontier hero.

The film deliberately treats the Vietnamese as the "other," an impenetrable cultural block. The camera peers through a window at a family praying before dinner, and surveys a congregation from

a church doorway. Their boats are seen at sea from those of white fishermen, and when some Vietnamese fishermen sneak ashore after illegal night fishing, we're the guys waiting for them on the docks. Their distance becomes even more frustrating because they share the aspirations of the natives. "I don't think anyone anticipated that you would want to own the boats," smiles the local minister at a town meeting called after a vigilante outbreak.

The battle lines have a middle ground: Glory (echoing "Old Glory"), the decent, ordinary, garden-variety American. She's not imprisoned by macho expectations of herself, and so doesn't need to make the Vietnamese into an enemy. Neither, however, is she a candy-coated *Places in the Heart* heroine. She's never been able to get over her attraction to Shang; and her love affair with him is also a kind of death-wish.

*Alamo Bay* refers, not coyly but evocatively, to a stockpile of Western movie images—male bonding at the local bar, the town meeting where the hapless community expresses itself at a loss without a strong leader, the climactic shootout. And it deftly recasts them, putting heroics in

then become both spectacular and critical. It becomes clear that when the Klan stages its coarse dramas—hooded men on a boat bearing down on the viewer; cross burnings; ritual chants of "Death to gooks!"—its value to the damaged men who join it is its very theatricality, its ritual sanctifying of their pain. It turns complex conflicts into a crusade; it locates an enemy, makes action—vengeance—possible.

The horror of the Klan in *Alamo Bay* is that, grounded as we are in Port Alamo's petty daily harassments, its building economic pressures, and its embattled macho ideals, the Klan's ersatz ritual makes a certain kind of sense. Its theatrics burst on the screen with the dark thrill they do in the lives of Shang and his spiritually-impooverished friends.

This is not the first time Louis Malle has made the dark side of a national character the center of a film. His *Lacombe, Lucien* was the story of a French adolescent who becomes a collaborator during World War II, as a way of earning himself both self-respect and glory in hard times, and out of a stultifying lower-middle-class culture. There, as here, Malle could find tragedy in material others

## ART«»ENTERTAINMENT

## FILM

## The Cowboy lives and he wears a black hat



context. Here, the bar is the scene of despairing drunks and Klan organizing; the hero of the town meeting is Dinh, the foreigner; and the shootout's improbable ending makes it a statement about false resolutions to social conflict.

The script, by Alice Arlen (*Silkwood*) is flamboyantly sentimental, but never false. Sentimentality is an authentic part of Port Alamo's little world, where tacky neon signs look exotic after a day on the docks, where even dreams take on a desperate quality and people cling to clichés for reassurance. The scenes with the Klan

exploited for moralism, or simply buried and then, perhaps unconsciously, built on. It is the second time he has explored the ironies of American character; his *Atlantic City* was a sympathetic, wistful view of our love affair with luck.

In *Alamo Bay*, he may have made the ultimate Western that *The Shootist* wasn't. There, John Wayne played a cowboy dying a non-hero's death by cancer, having lived past his time in history. What Malle knows is that the cowboy, far from being a relic of the past, is a living figure with a tragic dimension.

## MEDIA B E A T

## I Just Called to Say You're Censored

The annual Oscars ceremonies are not only Hollywood's tribute to itself, but a celebration of lowest-common-denominator sentiment, best expressed this year by Sally Field's pronouncement, "You like me!" But occasionally the real world peeks through the tinsel, and this year Stevie Wonder did the honors. When he accepted his Oscar for Best Song ("I Just Called to Say I Love You"), he did so in the name of South African leader Nelson Mandela, in his 22nd year of a life sentence for his leadership role in the African National Congress. Mandela led the formation of a guerrilla arm of the ANC after it was declared illegal in 1960. Revenge was swift from the apartheid government of South Africa; its state-owned broadcasting service promptly banned Wonder from its radio and TV shows. It isn't the first time the service has banned a performer. Exiled black South African singer Miriam Makeba was once declared off limits, and so were the Beatles, after John Lennon said the group was "more popular than Christ." A spokesman for the corporation explained that not everyone who opposes apartheid is banned; Wonder's sin was endorsing a leader of a violent movement to overthrow the government.

## Big, Bigger, Biggest

When ABC and Capital Cities Communications announced a merger, it raised eyebrows among those concerned with the independence of communications companies. The same kind of alarm went up with announcement of Rupert Murdoch's buy-in to the 20th Century Fox. Alarm over the integrity of the corporate media seems a bit tardy, especially in the case of ABC. ABC was created out of a merger between the failing American Broadcasting Company and the theater chain Paramount had been forced to spin off by a government consent decree. Early on ABC branched out, buying into Disneyland (the Disney corporation then fed ABC kiddie programs). ABC volunteered for merger, with ITT, in 1965, though the proposal was squashed by the Justice Department. Then Howard Hughes almost took over ABC, reportedly abandoning the project for fear of publicity should the FCC complain. That was in the days when the FCC took regulation more seriously; recent liberalizing will allow this merger to maintain most of both original companies' outlets. This infuriates Hollywood producers concerned about the uniting of cable and network TV interests. It is hard to imagine any merger cutting into ABC's integrity; it is the pioneer of "T&A" (tits and ass), of soft-news and infotainment. And it is hard to share Hollywood's concern over cable-network united front, since all sides share the same perspective: simple greed. Rupert Murdoch's deal is old news in a Hollywood where Gulf and Western controls Paramount and Coca-Cola runs Columbia, and where execs hop from corporate office to office with nary a change in soft-drink preference. Just how remote the concept of independent communications media is these days was highlighted when the *New Yorker* was purchased without consultation with its editor. The news provoked a spate of nostalgia and alarm among commentators for conglomerate-owned media, as if one weekly publication were the repository of all America's journalistic integrity.

## Daniel Schorr on the Firing Line

Daniel Schorr's commitment to airing the news has never been easy for the establishment. The veteran TV news reporter began his broadcasting career in Moscow, and the KGB kept him under tight surveillance. When he moved to Washington—eventually breaking the Watergate story on TV—American intelligence agencies watched him just as closely. Now he's fallen afoul of authority again and was fired, as of March 31, by Ted Turner's Cable News Network. On being hired in 1981, he insisted on a contract clause preserving his journalistic independence, and on that clause negotiations foundered. The incident recalled his departure from CBS in 1977, when he was pressured into resigning after passing a suppressed congressional intelligence report to the *Village Voice*, after CBS refused to make it public. The document recorded a sordid CIA history of skulduggery in Iran, among other places. In his autobiography *Clearing the Air*, he wrote, "To file and forget a document already in my possession would, as I saw it, have made me the ultimate suppressor." That attitude has made Schorr an example of the best in mainstream political reporting. "What I think America needs," he said on his regular CNN call-in show on a recent Saturday, "are people who can explain the news without any particular point of view." As his firing made clear, what America also needs are communications media that can keep people like that on staff.

## "Brought to You By..."

Geraldine Ferraro may be the best paid political figure to endorse a commercial product, with her soft-focus pitch for Pepsi. But she's not the only one. In Atlanta, for instance, Mayor Andrew Young endorses a hair care product in advertisements that attract attention on public transport. As more politicians cash in on their media image, we can expect that they will become more discriminating, searching out the product that represents them best. Media Beat encourages readers to send in their suggestions for the best match between politician and product. Look for the results in this space.

—Pat Aufderheide



# Tales

Continued from page 16

classes. The little support they receive from international agencies often falls short, and then a 10-year-old may teach the alphabet to a classroom of grandparents. I met the mother of one such boy earlier in the women's group. Like most of the children,

when he has a chance to use the camp's crayons and paper, Carlos draws little round circles in little blue streams. "Heads," he explains with no expression on his face or body.

Many of those living at Mesa Grande had been part of the 1981 Sumpul River massacre: thousands of refugees were attacked by both Salvadoran and Honduran soldiers, on either side of the river, as they attempted to cross it fleeing out of Salvador

after their villages had been burned. At least 600 Salvadoran refugees had been killed there. Carlos tucked in his shirt and wandered off to a friend. "You see the work we must do," his mother's voice too low for him to hear. She bent over a small clay mound of an oven.

Mesa Grande is in the mountains. The nights are cool. The camp is quiet and dark. Someone is spooked by a footstep. "The children want to live where there are no

IN THESE TIMES APRIL 17-23, 1985 15 soldiers." I was told that again and again, as though telling it could make it happen.

I had known the women's experiences were terrible. But I couldn't have imagined their faces as they were remembering them. Luisa had said, "After seeing certain things one is never not afraid again." True now for me as well as for them.

**Elizabeth Hanly**, who writes for *The Nation* and the *Village Voice*, is a frequent traveler in Central America.

## CALENDAR

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### WASHINGTON

**April 19-22**

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### NEW YORK

**April 25**

"Union Democracy Update: What's Happen-

ing: In the law/In the unions." Speakers: Herman Benson, Arthur Z. Schwartz, Judith Schneider. Reports on Teamster, Public employees, Hospital workers, Construction unionists, AFL-CIO, more. 8:00 p.m., Judson Memorial Church (Greenwich Village). 241 Thompson St. at Washington Square South. Admission free. Sponsored by: Association for Union Democracy, (718) 855-6650.

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**May 4**

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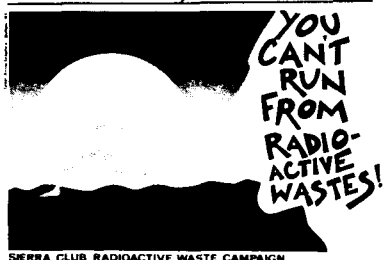
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# TALES OF TERROR

## FROM EL SALVADOR

In These Times Graphic

"We asked for food, they gave us bullets."

By Elizabeth Hanly

TEN WOMEN MET IN AN AIRLESS room with thick canvas walls and a sheet-metal roof. Dirt floors, wooden benches, the slimmest of cots. Rows of such rooms, thousands of them, each housing a family, share a plateau that is ringed with barbed wire. On the other side of that ring, Honduran soldiers, many of them still children, play in the trees, guns cocked. Some sleep in the boughs.

To arrive here I passed through four or five checkpoints. Soldiers swarmed everywhere around them. Just beyond the last barricade, a dozen little girls were there taking my hands, racing round those rows and other small boxlike buildings—clinics and classrooms mostly, until we found the women with whom I sit now. We're crowded here. Any one of us could easily touch the others.

The women are Salvadoran from rural hamlets. The place is Mesa

Grande, a refugee camp in Honduras, about 40 miles from the Salvadoran border. Ten thousand have come here to live, about half that number under the age of seven. Women's meetings like the one I was attending occur regularly. A score of small support groups have sprung up in the camps.

"It helps to talk," Rosa, short enough and plump enough to seem endlessly round, presented another breast to her child. "We women have never before turned to each other like this," added a red-haired Luisa, shifting her hands in apron pockets. Luisa's three children are dead, but not just that. When the Salvadoran National Guard came to her village in U.S. supplied helicopters, they chopped all the children to bits and threw them to the village pigs.

"The soldiers laughed all the while," Luisa told me. "What were they trying to kill?" she asked, still able to cry two years later.

We went around the circle. Each

woman told her story. The same story. Each had had nothing. They had worked, generations of them, all day, every day on someone else's land. Their children were parasite-ridden or starving. Visits to the landowners, the *patróns*, peaceful at first, had brought in the Guard. "We asked for food; they gave us bullets," Mariella, her wrinkles like rivers, spoke for the group.

And so the devastation began. Some of the women sided with the guerrillas, the *muchachos*, they call them. Some tried to remain neutral. The Guard, however, honored no such distinctions as they returned again and again to the villages. Like Luisa, all of the women still had tears to cry as they told stories of sons, brothers and husbands gathered into a circle and set on fire after their legs had been broken; or of trees heavy with women hanging from their wrists, all with breasts cut off and facial skin peeled back, all slowly bleed-

ing to death. A frenzy went with each telling, as though the women had yet to find a place inside themselves to contain it. Now, to my right one of the women was rocking another. Everyone was trembling.

### Sumpal River massacre.

Later, Rosa, her baby on her hip, walked with me over to a dusty open field, the camp's playground. A hundred home-made kites crackled in the wind above the sunset; lots of giggling when kites entangled. "We have found a voice," Rosa explained. "Together we write poems and songs about our poor Salvador. But our men feel they must suffer in silence. It breaks them," she added softly. "If we can do little for our men, at least we can work together to help our children."

Nearly everybody in the camp is busy with various workshops (wood-working or sewing among them) and

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